

# The Freeman

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Japan and the United States. The Under-Secretary (Mr. Cecil Harmsworth) replied in the negative. Sir Frederick then asked whether any assurance of this had been given to the United States Government. Mr. Harmsworth replied that none had been given, as there was no reason to believe that the responsible parties were in any doubt about the matter. We shall now produce an interesting historical parallel, tending to show cause for our conviction that the word of any Foreign Office maintained by a political government, whether in London, Paris, Berlin, Washington or elsewhere, is simply not worth the breath it takes to utter it.

On 8 March, 1911, Mr. Jowett put to the Foreign Office with reference to France exactly the same question put the other day by Sir Frederick Hall in reference to Japan; and the Under-Secretary (Mr. McKinnon Wood) answered in the negative. On 24 March, 1913, the same question was put by two members, this time to the Prime Minister (Mr. Asquith) who replied that "as has been repeatedly stated, this country is not under any obligation not public and known to Parliament, which compels it to take part in any war." On 28 April, 1914, Mr. Joseph King put the same question to the Foreign Office, and the Secretary (Sir Edward Grey) replied that the position of the Government remained the same as stated by the Prime Minister the year before. On 11 June, 1914, less than two months before the war, Sir William Byles and Mr. King raised the same question in reference to a naval agreement with Russia; and in reply Sir Edward Grey made an emphatic and elaborate denial. On 3 August, 1914, the House of Commons learned that the country had been under obligation to France for eight years; and the Sazonov letters, published by the Soviet Government, showed that it was also under the obligation of a naval agreement with Russia.

We are very glad that the last word we are called upon to give ex-President Wilson can be one of unfeigned praise. His veto-message on the emergency-tariff bill was established on clear reason and sound economics. Goods must be paid for in goods. If we want Europe to pay her debts to us, we must not bar out her commodities, for she can pay us in nothing but commodities. There can be no prosperity for the United States unless and until there be general prosperity; and this can not be brought about by the artificial contraction of a market. If we wish to sell freely to Europe, we must as freely accept Europe's goods in exchange for ours. In this message, Mr. Wilson left the country a legacy of invaluable wisdom, for which all who desire the nation's true prosperity should be grateful.

Just as the Espionage act was being scratched off the statute-books, Senator Borah came riding gallantly to the rescue of the Constitutional rights of free speech, free press and free assembly. The Senator would provide severe penalties against Federal officials who "unlawfully" violate these rights. The editors of this paper know very little about law, and this perhaps accounts for their having always entertained the impression that Constitutional rights could never be violated lawfully; yet Senator Borah's bill, if we have seen it correctly quoted, implies that they may, and supposedly Senator Borah knows; so we will not argue the matter. We wish him success with his enterprise. If he can put

## CURRENT COMMENT.

ONE of the oddest coincidences in the world is that when there is a big parley on between the Allies and the Germans, or whenever Mr. Lloyd George gets into political difficulties, our old friend in Helsingfors wakes up and begins to send out dispatches about the imminent downfall of the Soviet Government. It is a wonderful thing to see how these phenomena are synchronized. Last week, for instance, when the Allied-German conference was dickering in London and Mr. George was threatened with a split in his Cabinet over the Irish question, Helsingfors made things fairly hum with yarns about an anti-Soviet insurrection that had broken out here, there and everywhere in Russia. We do not know whether Lenin is dead again or not, because, to tell the truth, we did not read the dispatches carefully; but we did happen to notice the familiar tale that Trotzky is in hiding. Trotzky's hiding-places will some day run a fair second to Washington's headquarters or to the places where Lafayette stopped overnight.

THE character of these Helsingfors dispatches has the attestation of the French Foreign Office, which is most appropriate. According to this authority, the anti-Soviet movement has captured partial control in the city of Petrograd. The Soviet Government meanwhile has made a statement declaring that there have been no uprisings, insurrections or mutinies in any of the three cities designated in the colourful dispatches from Helsingfors. So you pays your money and you takes your choice. Our choice is for the statement of the Soviet Government, for one reason and one only. Several years' experience in checking up press-dispatches has shown that statements made by the Soviet Government usually turn out to be pretty nearly correct. It has also shown beyond peradventure that as the Helsingfors news-factory is the most diligent liar in commission at the present time, the French Foreign Office is the most accomplished; and any endorsement of the one by the other practically eliminates even the accidental possibility of truth.

ONE of the most important news-dispatches of the week passed quite unnoticed. In the House of Commons, 1 March, Sir Frederick Hall asked the Foreign Office whether the terms of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance obliged Great Britain to assist Japan in the case of war between

through a law which will win from Federal officials a respect denied to the Constitution, he will deserve credit for a difficult achievement. But this zeal to safeguard "the great guarantees of the Federal Constitution" seems a little belated. Where, oh where was Senator Borah when the Espionage act was being freely used by Federal agents as a pretext for fifty-seven varieties of official lawlessness? Our impression is that he was in the Senate.

FEDERAL officials are not likely to lose much sleep over Mr. Borah's attempt to restrain their violation of the Constitutional guarantees. The word "unlawful," even without the Espionage act, will cover a multitude of trespasses; especially since it must fall to Federal officials to decide when an infringement of individual liberty constitutes an "unlawful" trespass. Can anyone imagine a Federal judge, for instance, barring one or two honourable exceptions like Justices Rose and Anderson (of Boston), recognizing as such, an official violation of the Constitutional guarantees of free speech, free press and free assembly? There is nothing in their record during the past three years to warrant a supposition that Federal judges, in general, are much interested in the civil rights sections of the Constitution. Consequently, we think, Federal officials may safely share our scepticism regarding Mr. Borah's bill. For them it will mean, at most, a slight increase in the use of official whitewash.

EVERY once in a while, this paper is stirred to great enthusiasm by something that the Senate does not do. The unwilling failure of the peers to pass the big-navy bill is a case in point. In this instance the channel of legislation was plugged up by a minority consisting almost entirely of Senator Borah. With Mr. Harding so enthusiastic about the ocean, the Senator really hasn't much of a chance, in the long run; and this makes us wish more than ever that the upper and nether Houses of Congress could somehow acquire minorities wilful enough and watchful enough to keep our legislature from doing any more business from now until 1925. If somebody will just show us how we can accomplish this, we will guarantee to make Mr. Harding's term of office fruitful and famous and satisfactory all around.

IN this late land of liberty we have so many kinds of government that they are for ever getting in each other's way: government by law, government by administrative departments, government by injunction, government by commissions and boards; not to mention innumerable variants under the heads of State and municipal government. One of the current results of this manifold exercise of authority is the conflict between an order of Federal Judge Sibley, authorizing the Atlanta, Birmingham and Atlantic Railway Company to reduce wages, and an order of the Railway Labour Board warning them not to do so. The wage-cut was made, and the employees of the road struck in protest; and this pleasant situation will perhaps last until one of our other kinds of government shall step in and decide whether the Judge or the Board has authority in the matter.

IF an individual citizen wishing to set himself up in business had all his initial expenses paid for him by an indulgent Government; if he were then allowed to monopolize his particular industry and thereafter continually to increase his charges; and if he then complained that his business did not pay him any profits and came begging the Government for a further subsidy, there would be some justification for the view that he was either a bad business man or a good crook. In either case it would seem to be poor economy to lend him further assistance without at least making some inquiry into his disposal of the funds already given him. The railways of the country appear to us to be in exactly this position, yet between Congress and the Interstate Commerce Commission they manage to get authority to rob the taxpayers in ever-increasing measure. The earn-

ing power of this remarkable transportation-system of ours seems to decrease in direct ratio to the increased power of taxation which is delegated to the roads. A recent report of the Interstate Commerce Commission says that during 1920 the railways of the country earned \$454,035,669 less than they earned in 1919. The railway-industry certainly would appear to be in a languishing condition; and the hostility of the operators towards the Plumb Plan would be inexplicable in view of this apparent fact, were it not for the figures which the statisticians of the labour-unions have published from time to time, showing what experts the operators are, not only at robbing the public but at looting the treasuries of the railway-companies themselves.

As far as we know, the railway-executives have never tried to refute these figures. Indeed, why should they take the trouble to do so, when Congress, with the exception of a negligible minority, appears perfectly willing to behave as though such figures had never been made public? Perhaps their confidence in the security of their position accounts for the engaging frankness with which railway-operators carry on their thieving from the public purse. Certain it is that they have not resorted to that hypocrisy which is generally expected of those who steal on a big scale and under the protection of law. Yet it is possible that over-confidence may cause these gentlemen to crowd the mourners too hard. The public is long-suffering, but prohibitive freight-rates, though they may help to straighten out freight-jams by reducing the amount of freight, are after all a little hard on the real business of transportation, which is the moving of commodities from one point to another. It is reported that forty-two States are protesting the invasion of their sovereignty involved in the order of the Interstate Commerce Commission raising intra-State rates; and it is conceivable that individual shippers may grow restive under rates which make it unprofitable to ship their goods. There may eventually arise a general demand that the transportation-system of the country be used as a transportation-system; an idea apparently undreamed of in the philosophy of these gentlemen in Wall Street who have always seemed to think it is a finance-company.

THE American Legion to the rescue again! That dread bogey, German propaganda, has dared—or so say the Legion's national officers—to lift its head again among us; and we are to be protected from harm, even if the Legion has to set us all eying each other with suspicion and telling tales on each other to the authorities, as in the good old war-days. The Legion officials, with that insight which has characterized them from the beginning, discern in this supposed recrudescence of Teutonic propaganda two fell purposes: namely, "the disruption of the accord which exists between the United States and our Allies," and the creation of a powerful national political machine composed of disloyal elements. This paper would be more inclined to take alarm along with Legion officials if the first of these purposes were not already being achieved so admirably by our Allies themselves that it would be folly for German propagandists to attempt any improvement upon their methods; and if, where the second purpose is concerned, we were quite sure that the officials of the Legion were capable of recognizing disloyalty if they saw it.

As far as propaganda is concerned, it occurs to us that there are other Governments than the German which are doing a deal of ax-grinding in this country. The French Government, for instance, wants our backing in its attempt to exact the pound of flesh from Germany: it would like to be sure that popular sentiment here would support a French invasion of Germany for the ostensible purpose of forcing that country's acquiescence in French demands. It would also, perhaps, like to be sure that in case such action caused Germany to "go bolshevik," and the Russian Government should then decide to take a hand,

American sentiment would back the speedy dispatch overseas of that army of four million which General Renaud estimates would be necessary to save "civilization" again, this time from the combined German-Russian menace. Besides, French imperialism is expensive and French finances are in a bad way; and the eye of the French Government has rested covetously on our Uncle Sam's strong box for the last three or four years. There are plenty of good reasons why the Legion's present activity should be highly gratifying to the French Government: so many that it would behoove Legion officials to take care lest their Germanophobia lead them to become the unwitting tools of the French ax-grinders.

Lt.-COL. ANDERSON, commander of the 69th regimental post of the American Legion, spoke his mind at the mass-meeting of 28 February held in Madison Square Garden to protest against the employment of Negro troops in the occupied area of Germany. His speech raised a considerable disturbance in the Legion, and for a day or two the local papers carried accounts of resignations and recriminations galore. Not having heard the speech, we do not pretend to pass judgment on the points at issue between Lt.-Col. Anderson and his fellows in the Legion. We read one statement attributed to him, however, which we greatly like; it impresses us as being in the best American tradition. Referring to his critics, he said: "If they and the likes of them would give more time and consideration to the welfare of their country by attending to the insidious and destructive propaganda of what their type choose to call one of our Allies, instead of advocating and condoning the soul-torture and extermination by loathsome disease of a people whose Government has been properly beaten and crushed, they will be the more sincerely carrying out the dictates of the American conscience." There is no doubt about this.

IT looks as if the world might eventually witness an undignified international scramble for Russian trade, with ourselves bringing up a laggardly rear. Great Britain has been coqueting for some time with representatives of the Bolshevik Government, and now from Berlin comes the rumour that M. Krassin has arranged for the Soviet Government to buy some thousands of locomotives from German firms at less than half of what they would cost in other countries. The Krupps and the Stinnes interests are mentioned in connexion with the agreement, which is said to be part of a wicked German plot to wreck the treaty of Versailles even at the cost of an alliance with Russia. Assuming that the report is true, the names of Krupp and Stinnes are a fairly good guarantee that the German Government will conveniently forget Herr Simons's recent declaration that trade between Germany and the Bolsheviks was out of the question. When one comes to think of it, it is rather odd that Germany and Russia have been so slow in effecting a commercial alliance; the Allies have been diligently pushing them into each other's arms for the past two years.

YET on second thought it is not very strange, after all. The German Government, badgered as it has been by the Allies, has made common cause with them against Soviet Russia because the Allied Governments are interested in preserving the same economic system that the German Government is interested in preserving: a system of privilege which the Russian Government has seriously impaired and is trying to abolish. The German Government has given convincing proof of its desire to adhere to the Western world; but the Allied Governments have done their level best to make such adherence an economic impossibility; it may be that their latest indemnity-demands have at last convinced reluctant German industrialists that the risk of bolshevik contagion from the East is to be preferred to the certainty of economic ruin from the West.

IT appears to us that at least one sound and indisputable deduction may be drawn from Mr. Lloyd George's recent

victories at the bye-elections in the Cardigan Boroughs and at Woolwich; namely, that as long as the British Premier receives popular endorsement and encouragement of this kind so long will the British public have to endure their present afflictions. That, after all, is their own affair, and this paper has no wish to criticize their peculiar taste in Premiers, which after all is little better than our own in the matter of Presidents. Yet, as between friends, there is this disagreeable thing to be said: that by thus giving renewed sanction to Mr. Lloyd George's policies, the British people are making it exceedingly difficult for their friends abroad to defend them on the score of their helplessness to prevent a continuance of the crimes that are being committed in their name in Ireland and elsewhere by Mr. Lloyd George and his jackals.

A GENTLEMAN who calls himself "the largest factory-broker in the world" has lately been spreading upon the pages of the metropolitan press a series of advertisements pertaining to "the super-readjustment of a great industrial city." Some of these notices are exceedingly interesting, and one in particular may well engage the attention of some of our feminist friends. At the head of this advertisement is a picture of a hospitable-looking factory-gate, through which a multitude of women are crowding in to work, and below are the words: "These girls reduce the cost of male labour. The fact that all the women in this metropolitan industrial suburb are profitably employed in the existing mills enables the men-folks to engage in the heavier industries at more reasonable rates than in sections where the burden of support rests entirely upon the family heads. Therefore, the establishment of a plant in such a community would minimize the possibility of labour-troubles." The writer of the advertisement seems to be something of a feminist; he believes that woman's place is in the factory, and he thinks that the idea will appeal to the manufacturers for whose patronage he is bidding. We agree with him that woman's place is any place she wants and can get; but we feel obliged to say in behalf of the girls in this picture that any movement which stops short with the acquisition of equal rights, may result simply in a re-distribution of unequal wrongs. For instance, the drafting of the entire female population into the industrial labour-force would produce a wide variety of results, some of which are suggested in our broker's advertisement; but if the broker is right, this operation alone does not threaten a real economic emancipation of woman-kind, much less of the race.

"JERSEY justice" has a new connotation since Judge Watson of Paterson denied citizenship to one Harry J. Rubenstein, who declared his belief in collective ownership and democratic control of industry through the orderly process of government. "Do you believe in the rule of the majority?" asked Judge Watson. The misguided alien admitted that he did, but his application was denied because the candidate did not believe in "the rights and protection of minorities." But as far as our experience goes New York minorities have no rights worth mentioning; while in New Jersey they have all there are. The Jersey commuter who jiggles back and forth daily between these opposing theories of government must have a very hectic and complicated time.

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## TOPICS OF THE DAY.

### AT THE FEET OF GAMALIEL.

MR. HARDING's inaugural address was the work of one whom the *Paris Petit Journal* excellently describes as "a man of the middle class, simple, modest, of good faith and honesty"; and we should add, a man who is a good deal bewildered by having been accidentally and unexpectedly jumped up into a position of notoriety. A sturdy provincial—kindly, unintelligent, unleavened by any kind of contact with the best that has been thought and said in the world, devoid of intellectual curiosity, untouched by any influences that may be termed in the highest sense civilizing—such has been Mr. Harding's reputation among the few competent judges who know him; and as such he presented himself to the world last week when he entered upon his long ordeal of

*Digitus monstrari et dicier, Hic est!*

Men reveal themselves rather completely in their writing, and Mr. Harding gives by no means an unpleasing picture of himself in his inaugural address. Those who do not share this paper's estimate of the nature of politics are perforce obliged to interpret the address as a political document. This is a task of peculiar difficulty and unsatisfactoriness, and we are glad that we can consistently escape it. As a declaration of principles or policy, *il dit tout ce qu'il veut*—so runs the terrible sentence of the French critic—*mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire*. Everybody wanted to know what Mr. Harding was going to do; but as the poor man had not himself the faintest idea of what he was going to do or of what he could do, he had recourse throughout to the politician's saving grace of generalization; and occasionally, if the reports of his speech carried correctly, to incoherence. We read the speech in an evening paper and again in two morning papers, and we were considerably puzzled by certain sentences; for example:

I would rejoice to acclaim the era of the Golden Rule, and crown it with the autocracy of service.

What is the autocracy of service, and why would not any other word of four syllables do just as well as autocracy? Perhaps Mr. Harding wrote "authority" which would make sense and be pretty good; if so, he ought to get after his proof-readers and wake them up. Or, again:

Since freedom impelled and independence inspired and nationality exalted, a world super-government is contrary to everything we cherish and can have no sanction by our Republic.

Or this:

We have mistaken unpreparedness to embrace it to be a challenge of the reality; and due concern for making all citizens fit for participation will give added strength of citizenship and magnify our achievement.

One can make neither head nor tail of these. Still, even should it turn out that Mr. Harding is responsible for the unintelligibility and the shabby English that appear in portions of his address, one would not feel aggrieved. He has never had any ideas to express, so he has been comfortably free of the discipline that one has to go through in order to express one's ideas clearly. What interests us, however, and prepossesses us towards Mr. Harding, is the unpretentiousness of his speech. Mr. Harding was placed where he had to say something, and he had nothing to say; hence he must talk buncombe of some kind. Most politicians possessed of no more ability than Mr. Harding, would

under these circumstances have paid the charlatan's tribute to the occasion; they would have modernized their buncombe. They would have pretended to familiarity with a whole series of modern conditions, and pretended to talk knowingly about them. Mr. Harding's address, as far as we can judge, is most creditably free from this sort of shallowness; and thereby the reader is saved many a groan of impatience. Mr. Harding talks about the tariff, for instance, quite as McKinley might have talked; quite, in fact, as McKinley, with a little better turn for language and its uses, did talk. He talks about the other matters canvassed in his speech, quite as any dull, honest, inexperienced and benevolent man in our public life of forty years ago might have talked. Even the catchwords and formulae of forty years ago are there, apparently as fresh as when they were first encysted in Mr. Harding's mind. He speaks of "the founding fathers" with all the vacuous unction of the old-time Fourth of July orator. The evangelical tone of the address also is in the old vein; the speaker's political sanctions are informed and vivified throughout by those of the anthropomorphic theology current in Mr. Harding's youth.

Having no care for politics, we are free to say that we like this. We think it is a strong attestation of Mr. Harding's sincerity that as he waded out into the stagnation of platitudes, he showed no ambitious disposition to go beyond his depth. The Washington press-dispatches have been more or less apologizing for Mr. Harding, saying that his inaugural speech is by no means the best he can do, that he was very busy and much bothered by a great many things, and really had no proper chance to do himself proud. We think that the correspondents are wrong about this; we think that he did indeed do himself proud by speaking precisely as he did. If Mr. Harding had offered to let us revise his speech, which, thank fortune, he did not do, we would not have changed a word of it; not even to restore or clarify its sense, to straighten out its inconsistencies and contradictions or to vamp up its decrepit English. The politician, or the politically-minded person, here and abroad, may make what they can of its political implications; and they are diligently doing so. The English papers, such as we have seen quoted—all but the sturdy old *Yorkshire Post*—are all busily buttering up Mr. Harding in a slather of sop, as it is to their interest to do. The French papers do not show the same unanimity. Our American papers, in pursuance of their curious infatuated persuasion that politics count for something other than calamity, dissect the speech for evidence of what Mr. Harding will do about this or that. All of which is probably very well, but a literary view of the speech is, we think, much more interesting.

In such view, Mr. Harding has made a very candid and complete exhibit of himself, his excellences and his weaknesses; the speech gives quite completely his own measure, his measure of the occasion, and his measure of the times he lives in. It is his frank willingness to do this that has communicated to us our first spark of interest in Mr. Harding; not many, we repeat, would have done as much. The speech shows qualities that may, if reinforced and kept active, make Mr. Harding something more than a mere name in the country's list of Presidents. He seems to be kindly, frank, simple-hearted, unpretentious; so was Lincoln. Lincoln kept these qualities fresh in the preservative of humour; and he developed immense shrewdness, which is a by-product of humour acting upon the original qualities of kindness, frankness, simplicity and unpre-

tentiousness. It is certain, too, that with Lincoln this was a conscious process; he *worked* at humour, worked to procure it a free flow upon his human qualities, worked at the development of shrewdness; and thus he redeemed and transformed disabilities and limitations such as those under which Mr. Harding chiefly labours—provincialism, ignorance, inexperience. Lincoln was intelligent, and Mr. Harding quite clearly is not; but contact with great affairs does wonders for even a fifth-rate mind which is informed with humour.

It may be too late for Mr. Harding to begin with this best of training for his work, but we hope not; he can take heart perhaps from the doctrine of his familiar evangelicalism that “while the lamp holds out to burn,” and so on. If we were chosen as Mr. Harding’s most intimate political adviser, we should keep him primed for months with nothing but the political essays which Mr. Dooley wrote during McKinley’s Administration. By the aid of these as by nothing else, could he gain wisdom and understanding in his work. For instance, the papers now break the depressing news that M. Viviani is headed this way on the usual errand of wool-pulling and hoodwinking for the French Government. Is any President who has not continually and uppermost in his mind Mr. Dooley’s paper on the relations between McKinley and the Spanish Premier Sagasta, competent to meet this emergency? No, not Lincoln himself, in our judgment. But the point is that Lincoln would *have* that very paper uppermost in his mind. He would know that his salvation depended on his keeping it uppermost in his mind; and ten to one, when M. Viviani made his first premonitory call at the White House, Lincoln would have the book down and be reading it to him before he fairly had his overcoat off, and Brother Viviani would realize that he was up against a hard, hard game. Lincoln used to do that sort of thing very regularly by way of dispelling illusions otherwise hard to get rid of, and it would be an immeasurable benefit to the nation if Mr. Harding could follow his example.

## PHILANTHROPY AND SIX PER CENT.

WHEN Mr. Lloyd George begins to quote Scripture for his purposes, it is a sign that things are in rather a bad way. “‘Love your neighbour,’” he piously remarked in the House of Commons the other day, “is not only sound Christianity, but good business.” He was appealing to the British bankers, and his theme was that of the industrial depression which now afflicts England as a result of “the stagnation of the purchasing power of Central Europe.” Mr. George’s piety and philosophy are alike belated; he should have taken thought for both before he made his “knock-out blow” speech in December, 1916. The reaction of the knockout-blow is now hurting England, quite as anyone not a politician or an army-officer might have known it would. In this emergency, according to Mr. George, there is no relief until “we feel a little more neighbourly.” The practical point of Mr. George’s concern with the precepts of Christianity and good business, was the establishment of credits large enough to set Central Europe on her feet again. The Government, he said, had “failed to induce the banks to take any share in the abnormal risks of establishing credits”; and the Government could not assume the whole risk without being unfair to the taxpayer. Mr. George’s sudden care for the taxpayer is as noteworthy as his extemporized interest in Christianity; but it moved him to appeal to the bankers to reconsider the proposed credits as vital to the country’s trade.

The banks, however, appear to think that they have been philanthropists about long enough and that it is time for them to go back to the business of banking while the going is still good; or at least while it is still possible. Strictly speaking, they have not been in the banking business for a long time. They have been mainly philanthropists. When Governments, in defraying the costs of war, exceed the taxable capacity of labour and capital, then all governmental loans made by or through banks, are purely philanthropic transactions. In England, as in some other countries, the limit of unsound banking was thus reached long ago. The British bankers now appear to be aware of this, and regard further philanthropic ventures of another kind as out of the question, even when urged to them by Mr. Lloyd George.

They are quite right. The real nature of the “abnormal risks” that Mr. George speaks of, is easily discerned. In the first place, however much we may love our neighbour, however much we may hate him, credits to assist Central Europe while the indemnity-terms threaten Germany with economic servitude, is neither good Christianity for anyone, nor good business for British bankers. Two other complications appear: first, the French loans suggested a fortnight ago by M. Briand, amounting to something between ten and fifteen billion francs; the other—a very awkward problem for bankers—is the British war-debt of eight billion sterling. Philanthropy from British banks towards Central Europe under these conditions is impossible; philanthropy in general, while Europe is in a state of chaotic nationalism, is highly perilous as a banking policy. The “abnormal risks” must disappear before it is possible to establish credits with any degree of certainty that will help Europe as a whole and help to stabilize the world’s commerce. When Mr. George asks the bankers to take these “abnormal risks,” he is simply asking them to maintain a condition of State bankruptcy for an indefinite period.

Banks live on deposits. The business of a bank is to accept deposits of wealth and find for them the safest and most advantageous investment. When depositors thrive, banks thrive. But banks can not eat their pie and also have it; they can not have security and prosperity both going and coming. They can not maintain reckless Governments which reduce purchasing power by iniquitous taxation and expect depositors to thrive; for taxpayers are depositors, and suffer in both capacities when their wealth is squandered by Governments on unproductive ventures. Banks, whether in Britain, the United States, or elsewhere, can not too quickly or too thoroughly understand that Governments make no return to the producers of wealth, that they are economic parasites; and that banks can not function when they permit parasites to squander wealth and bury commerce under a load of paper too big to be redeemed.

## THE DRAGON’S TEETH.

In our last issue we published an editorial comment on the statement made by Mr. Bainbridge Colby about the activities of the Negro troops in the occupied district of Germany. Mr. Colby’s statement was so audacious, its motives so obvious and the influences which prompted it so manifest, that we thought the matter worth no more than the word or two that we gave it. During the week, however, “the Horror on the Rhine” has attracted a great deal of attention. Mass-meetings have been held, one State legislature

has made a protest, and the speech of Lt.-Col. Anderson, to which we refer in another column, has raised internal ructions in the ranks of the American Legion. Under these circumstances, we think we are justified in taking up the subject again and dealing with it more explicitly.

We ourselves have not visited the occupied area and know no more by first-hand knowledge than our readers know. As we said last week, we depend wholly upon authority. One set of authorities testifies to an appalling and outrageous condition of debasement and degradation due to the presence of African troops. This testimony is gathered up and published in England by a tried and proved friend of the Negro race, Mr. E. D. Morel. Associated with him or corroborating his work, are Mr. George Lansbury, General Thomson, British military representative on the Supreme War Council at Versailles, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby, Professor Enrico Ferri, General Marazzi, MM. Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, and Paul Louis, MM. Maffi, Treves and Ciccotti of the Italian Parliament, Prince Max of Baden, Colonel Petersen of the Swedish army, and others. Another set of authorities endeavours by a kind of *ipse dixit* to discredit this testimony; and this set is made up of the French Foreign Office and the Department of State at Washington.

Colonel Petersen, writing in the Swedish paper *Aftonbladet* of 18 January, 1921, as a personal observer of the conditions he describes, says that "the conscience of the whole civilized world has been outraged, and the reputation of France seriously damaged." M. Henri Barbusse writes, "My comrades of the war and I protest once more against the barbarism and the duplicity of the men who rule us." General C. B. Thomson speaks of his "horror and disgust at the employment of black French troops in Germany. . . . France is, in fact, engaged in militarizing Western Africa. . . . This suicidal policy is the work of a small clique of reactionaries and militarists. . . . Ever since the signing of the armistice, both the French and British Governments have submitted to dictation by these men." General Marazzi utters an emphatic protest, and the Italian deputies grimly say that the employment of the Negro troops "is an episode both instructive and symbolical" and that they are filled with loathing at the shamelessness of it.

A protest was issued last year in Sweden, signed by fifty thousand Swedish women; and it is interesting to note that the American colony in Berlin held a public meeting in protest on 14 July last, so largely attended that it ran into an overflow-meeting, and called by resolution for the sympathy of American women. So we might go on reproducing evidence of this order at considerable length; but we are disposed to stop here and remark that the only evidence that to our knowledge has been adduced in rebuttal is the unsupported word of the French Foreign Office, that of the State Department, given through Mr. Bainbridge Colby, and an ambiguous statement made by an officer of the American army of occupation. Considering that the French Foreign Office and the State Department are inveterately and regularly untruthful in matters of this kind and have every reason of self-interest on the side of their being untruthful in the present premises; considering that the French Government has never dared to stand up to the prosecution which it threatened against *Le Populaire* for ventilating this scandal; considering that the French people have been purposefully and carefully kept by the French Government from knowing the facts, both of the process of conscripting

the Negro troops in French West Africa—facts which caused the French Governor-General to resign in protest—and of the behaviour of these troops in the occupied region of Germany; considering these things, we think we have said enough to justify our belief in the affirmative side of the contention.

We are quite of the mind of Prince Max of Baden, who says, "I fail to understand the attitude of mind which hesitates to speak out on this subject, for the wrong done to the black troops is not less than the wrong done to the German people." Or if Prince Max, as a German, be a suspected witness, Mr. Arthur Ponsonby says of the Negro troops that "their cause for complaint is in some ways stronger than that of the population among whom they are forced to reside. If Europe is to become accustomed to the employment of coloured soldiers for political purposes, there is a danger in store for the African population as well as the European, the full extent of which we can only faintly realize." Our own editorial comment on this subject has been shaped wholly by this consideration. Up to July, 1918, the French Government had employed nearly one million of coloured troops in the war. Conscription is now in force over the whole of French tropical and sub-tropical Africa; and the French authorities count on this to produce a permanent Negro army of 100,000, with another 100,000, mostly Negroes, raised from Madagascar, the French West Indies and the French Somali coast. The term of service is for three years, two of which are to be spent in Europe. Nothing more, probably, need be said; the fact itself enables a clear forecast of its consequences. But Mr. E. D. Morel, writing as an Englishman to his fellow-countrymen, says:

To the people of Britain the appeal is direct, precise and dual in character. As a governing Power in Africa the French policy of conscripting African manhood faces us with two alternatives, that of ultimately conscripting the peoples of our African colonies and dependencies; or running the risk of having our own territories invaded, sooner or later, by masses of African levies in revolt against the slender chain of an allegiance which can be snapped at any moment. . . . The question for us is: Are our infant sons to be doomed to a violent and senseless death in manhood because French militarism is sowing the seeds of ineradicable hatreds in Europe?

That indeed is the question, as affecting Britain; and as affecting Britain it affects the world.

### THE CITY VERSUS THE STATE.

ONE may view under several aspects the conflict over the transportation-problem that has arisen between the guardians of the Commonwealth at Albany and the municipal corporation of New York. The special attorney for the city has said that it is the old, old fight between the people and corporate greed; and once again the Senator from California is ready to stand at Armageddon and battle for the Lord. Moral inflammation has been one of the chronic diseases of American political thought, and if this were all that could be said about the duel between the State and the city, some of us would confess to a feeling of disappointment. Another view of the matter, that of the Home Rulers, is scarcely more satisfactory. State-Senator Cotillo's proposal to create a forty-ninth State out of the present city of New York does nothing more than revive the resolution that Mayor Fernando Wood brought forward, in a mild fever of secession, at the outbreak of the Civil War. The moral issue of "honesty versus greed," and the political issue of "local rights versus State rights," have both been dragged out of the political junk-room; and neither exhibits as

much imagination as one would need to invent a mouse-trap. If mechanical inventors and engineers confronted their difficulties in the same fashion as the politicians, we should still be travelling in stagecoaches, reading by candlelight, and blotting our writing paper with fine sand.

Now, there is something inherently attractive in the case for home rule. The five random New Yorkers who were asked by the New York *Globe's* inquiring reporter whether they were in favour of the city's seceding from the State answered with a unanimous Yes. Yet when we examine the current criticism of the State Executive's plans, we discover that the citizens of New York apparently do not resent the capricious exercise of power by the State: they resent the fact that this power is in the hands of legislators who represent the Mohawk Valley rather than the lower part of the Hudson estuary. Instead of calling into question the principle of *étatism*, as worked out under a parliamentary system of government, the Home Rulers only go so far as to resent the application of this principle by some particular clique or party that does not, as the saying is, smell of their pack. The demand for home rule is usually a protest against the employment of arbitrary political power by an alien group. When home rule is achieved, the foreign governors are replaced by a body of men who are more congenial to the interests and habits of thought of the local community; but the powers that are exercised by the local legislators and administrators are still of the political order.

What is lacking in the current philosophy of home rule is a sense of the futility of arbitrary political power, no matter by whom it may be exercised. Power that is based upon ability to deliver the votes is inherently at odds with power that is based upon capacity to deliver the goods; and the case for genuine home rule—that is, for functional autonomy—is undermined by trying to establish over the local area a new sovereign authority whose ultimate sanction is that of physical force. What is needed is not a means of giving power to the "people" as set over against "corporate interests," but a recognition of the corporate interests of the city as a more or less highly organized body of consumers.

The transportation-companies have enlisted the authority of the State in order to obtain by force certain financial advantages which they could not obtain by contract with the municipal corporation. It is by following in the trail of Gierke and asserting the autonomy of corporations, that the advocates of home rule will put their feet on firmer ground. The autonomy that a municipal corporation needs in order to build schools, pave streets, supply water, and perform the hundred and one other services that are necessary to the health and happiness of people grouped together in an urban area, is similar to that which is needed by a commercial corporation, a trade union, or a co-operative association. From the economic standpoint, the city is a special kind of functional organization. As such, the city should take its stand as an equal with every similar organization; it gives up its claim to corporate autonomy when it goes in for the crown and sceptre of sovereignty on its own account.

There is a further reason why the advocates of home rule should be careful about their advocacy of making New York City a separate State. As far as municipal services are concerned, the boundaries that separate New York from New Jersey are obsolete; and to raise an additional boundary between Man-

hattan Island and Westchester County would only make its situation, in transportation for example, a little more anomalous. Take one of the U. S. Geological Survey maps, badly out of date as it is, and survey the region within a twenty-mile radius of Forty-second Street. For the accommodation of shipping, the piping of water, the disposal of sewage, the maintenance of natural recreation-grounds (such as Inter-State Park) it is obvious that the whole metropolitan area, from the Orange Mountains to the Hempstead Plain is as much a single unit as that of Greater London or Greater Boston. Nothing but a State boundary based upon grants of land to colonial proprietors, keeps this whole territory from being linked up for specific municipal enterprises, into a single administrative unit.

What is true of New York holds good for various other cities that are divided by State boundaries; one might cite Philadelphia-Camden, Chicago-Gary, and St. Louis East and West. Political barriers are meaningless except for the purposes of exercising arbitrary political authority. The municipality that earnestly desires to perform its necessary business, and that has no particular interest in meddling in the business of other institutions, should see the necessity of securing wider co-operations than are possible through the agency of the political State. There must be imagination enough to devise forms of co-operation between corporate bodies—whether they are industrial or municipal matters little—which will cheerfully ignore the existence of that pervasive ethereal medium called the State. A city that had the courage to pattern its taxation-policy after Thoreau's would tax itself for the upkeep of services and institutions that are necessary to its existence, whether or not these fell within its official boundaries, and would refuse to contribute taxes for other purposes like the National Guard and the Albany legislature and the State Board of Regents and one or two other offices that could be mentioned. Had it enough gumption to exercise this elementary form of home rule, it would have more than a little chance of maintaining contractual relations with rapid-transit companies without having to protect itself against the interference of the State. Unfortunately, the only great popular leader who appreciates the political wisdom of Thoreau is now conducting an important mission in India; and so the fight against the State Government of New York will probably continue to be waged with weapons whose rusty edge may very well poison the well-meaning hands that wield them.

### AMERICA, O AMERICA.

(From "Les Temps Maudits" of Marcel Martinet.)

AMERICA, America, where may we seek you to-day, what would you be to-morrow, O America?

Europe—old woman, drunken, demented, blind old woman, tragic, stabs herself, laughing, sobbing, sinks to her knees and, in the dust and blood, searches in vain the torch dropped from her wild fingers.

And you, where are you—what are you, O America? With your makers of arms, with your makers of gold, rich to-day with the husk of Europe, victim perhaps to-morrow, will you in turn enter the round of madness?

Round of madness, round of death—Liberty, your dawn is darkened—

O Occident, after the rut of Germans (O Occident, do you feel the earth tremble?) hoof-beats of Cossack horses shaking the soil, and farther still, the shock and the tramping of old Asia awakened. . . .

O liberty dreamed of, O justice longed for, O new barbaric ages.

America, America, O confluent of races, new stream of waters eternal, new country, unknown country, will you res-

cue the torch, and will you honour your prophetic image—  
Liberty lighting the world?

America, America, where are you, what would you be?

Above the corpse of pale Europe grimace Want and Sorrow, Folly and Hatred—

America, America, with what eyes do you regard us? Will you receive the exiles Beauty and Pity and Justice? Will you rescue the torch? Will you rebuild the city?

O mankind, you can not die, O soul of man, you blaspheme, you falter, but you are born again and you take flight anew under a younger heaven.

America, America, will you point out our folly to your children that they in turn may follow or that they may flee in horror. . . .

America, O America, new country, unknown country, land of our hope and our anguish. O new hope, last hope—we turn our hearts towards you, trembling to you over there who are also a vast obscure field of battle, to you over there who are also our field of battle. We turn our hearts towards you, our hope and our anguish. Will you rescue the torch? Will you build for the soul of man? Or will you follow our bloody track?

Who are you—and what would you be to-morrow, America, America?

*Translated by IDA O'NEIL.*

### THE BASIS OF OUR RUSSIAN POLICY.

THE Russian policy of the Wilson Administration must be explained on a basis of the personal equation, if it is to be explained at all. To attribute it wholly to the force of economic determinism does not fill the bill. Economic determinism acts in the main with hard-headed common sense; it goes about its business in an eminently practical fashion, seeing its objective with a long view, but always willing to compromise in a circuitous route. Granted that the organized Allied and American world has from the first instinctively realized that by hook or crook it must overthrow the Soviet regime in Russia, or itself pass by rapid stages into the oblivion of outworn systems; yet I believe that economic determinism, free of the personal equation, would not have followed the purblind policy of Mr. Wilson, M. Clemenceau and Mr. Churchill towards this insidious danger. Economic determinism would have recognized the simple fact that military intervention would strengthen the position of the Soviet Government through a revival of the spirit of nationalism; that the heaviest burden which could be thrown on the Soviets would be to place them under full responsibility for the economic rehabilitation of the country. Failure to recognize these facts, together with the general failure to deal with the situation on any sort of fact-basis, discloses the hand of the personal equation in the establishment of policy. A few old men, ill informed and perversely obstinate, sat in the seats of power. We must analyse the psychology of these men, before we reach the true explanation.

I am not here concerned with a discussion of the psychology of European diplomacy; for, in spite of what appears to be the obvious fact, European diplomacy is not responsible for Allied and American policy towards Soviet Russia. Responsibility rests where final authority resides; and the ultimate blame in this matter will be placed by truthful history on those who, having the power to control the decision and the intelligence to recognize the error, withheld their hand and permitted the wrong policy to be established.

There was a time, in the early stages of our participation in the war, when Mr. Wilson knew what was wrong with the world, and saw what to do about it, and was determined in his mind to

accomplish a betterment. All power rested in his hands, and would have remained with him had he given it the vitality of consistent practice. He failed utterly; and the key to that failure lies in his fundamental error in Russian policy. Out of this intricate but dominant problem in the psychology of leadership flow in directly ramifying streams all the hideous errors of statecraft which have brought the world to the pass in which it now finds itself.

In the spring of 1918, Mr. Wilson was on the point of recognizing the Soviets as the *de facto* Government of Russia. I mean by that that he grasped, in an intellectual sense, the course of events in Russia, that he comprehended the forces and tendencies of the Bolshevik Revolution, that he distrusted the early propaganda on this issue which emanated from London and Paris, that he appreciated the high moral ground taken by the Soviets at Brest-Litovsk, and that, in short, he was the only statesman in the world who saw the question in an open light and realized that it demanded unprecedented action. Let us put it that he was one step removed from recognition; and in the same breath let us admit that this step was a wellnigh impossible one for him to take.

There is indeed plenty of evidence of Mr. Wilson's favourable attitude towards the Soviet Government in two State documents written by him at this period. I refer to the Fourteen Points speech of 8 January, 1918, and to his belated message to the first All-Russian Congress of the Soviets in early March of the same year. The clearness of his attitude and the emphasis of his words in these documents will be well-remembered.

More important than these, however, is the stand against intervention in Siberia which Mr. Wilson took that spring, and which he embodied in a secret note to the Japanese Government stating his position in plain language. It is characteristic that this note was not made public at the time, although it was presented identically to all the Allied Governments as an expression of American policy. Had it been given publicity, it would definitely have committed the United States to non-intervention, if not, indeed, to tacit support of the Soviet Government. Examining the text of this important document, the clearness of the President's mind on the Russian question, the strength of his convictions, and the general rightness of his attitude towards the policies of the war, are plainly disclosed. It was written early in March of 1918. The reasons therein advanced against intervention in Siberia are both moral and practical: to wit, that the Russian people would look upon Allied intervention in the East exactly as they were then looking upon German intervention in the West (the implication being unescapable that in Mr. Wilson's own mind Allied and German intervention stood in the same case), and that the net result of such a policy would be ultimately to align the whole of Russia against the Allies and the war.

Why did Mr. Wilson fail to give this note publicity, and so leave the way open for his statesman-like position to be reversed later on? Why did he succumb to intervention in July? What had happened in the interval since the beginning of the year 1918 to change his mind?

In the first place, I doubt if the President's mind changed at all. The things that had happened had affected, not his mental processes, but his spiritual condition. The change lay in the

realm, not of intellect, but of psychology. Starting with a keen intellectual appreciation of Russian fundamentals in the period immediately following the Bolshevik Revolution, and with no psychological reaction in particular towards the situation—that is to say, starting without inhibitions—the succeeding months brought to bear upon Mr. Wilson's nature an increasing volume of incident calculated chiefly to affect his psychological condition. This new volume of experience, instead of resting upon his strength, bore almost wholly upon his weakness. The scale of emotion, impulse and perversity, as opposed to the scale of logic and reason, sank lower and lower, until, gradually the thought of compromise grew more plausible and familiar, and the moral balance with which he originally had weighed the Russian situation became entirely destroyed. At the point where he began to welcome the interventionist arguments of European diplomacy in support of his own self-deception, and to lend the influence of his high office to dissemination of the very propaganda which at the beginning of the year he had frankly distrusted, his moral position was lost, and the die was cast for all the error that followed.

Briefly, the main reasons which during this period of probation affected Mr. Wilson adversely towards the Soviet Regime in Russia may be stated under the following four heads: (1) Increasing pique and resentment at the publication of the secret treaties by the Soviet Government, as the significance of this act became more and more apparent, and as the disastrous bearing of the treaties themselves on the ostensible war-policies of America and the Allies became more and more exposed. (2) Distrust of and resentment towards Colonel Raymond Robins, then acting in a semi-diplomatic capacity as head of the American Red Cross in Russia, on account of a political incident in the presidential campaign of 1916. (3) A growing personal animosity towards Lenin and Trotzky, amounting to jealousy, as these Russian leaders began outrightly to act in accordance with their professions, and as the attention of the President's liberal following little by little became alienated from himself in the direction of Russia. (4) A strong psychological inhibition, born of tradition, training, and the characteristic contempt of a highly-developed and arbitrary mind towards any subject which it has not thought through and on which it is ill-informed, against socialism *per se*.

To take the case of Colonel Robins first, it was truly unfortunate that the one American representative in Russia who saw the light, who faced and reported a fact-situation, who constantly urged the Administration along the right course, was a man who not only lacked the confidence of the President, but who actually excited Mr. Wilson's animosity whenever his name was mentioned. Here was enough in itself, in view of the grievous faults in Mr. Wilson's character, to spoil the chances of Soviet recognition, even though all his intellectual processes urged him towards that policy. I remember how we were under the necessity at that time of keeping Colonel Robins's name out of any memoranda submitted to the President, knowing that Mr. Wilson was unable to estimate facts at their face-value when his adverse psychology was aroused. As Colonel House once told me, "Everything Colonel Robins said and did in Russia, his very presence in the foreground of that

scene, was daily doing injury to the cause of the Soviets in the eyes of the Administration."

Respecting the President's jealousy of the Soviet leaders, we come to matters that can be understood only by those who have cleared their minds of the Wilson illusion. We now are examining, not a demigod, but an extremely fallible human being, a man whose greatness of mind and vision were matched by even greater weaknesses of character; a man susceptible to flattery beyond the ordinary, a man positively demanding adulation and sycophancy, a man inflamed by a hero-myth, exalted constantly by a voracious egoism. Even before we had entered the war, Mr. Wilson had visualized himself as the saviour of civilization, as the great liberal leader of the world. In this design, he had thrown America into the war, he had laid down his liberal principles, he had harped in every speech upon the outcome, he had established his policies with utter confidence, he had brushed aside all facts, events and relations which seemed to controvert the divine nature of the enterprise; and, looking towards the future, he had reserved plenty of ammunition for the peace conference, in the firm resolve to have his way likewise with that congress and there to bring to fruition all his hopes and promises. He saw the pattern like a scroll from beginning to end; and he himself was the signature to that scroll.

The world, carried off its feet by such a powerful and extraordinary personality, had in a measure come to see the same design. Wilson already was hailed as the hope of humanity. The hero-myth was springing up everywhere like a mushroom. Especially were the liberal journals throughout the world, the organs of the intelligentsia, the voices of his own kind, sounding his praise. He felt elated; he became more and more self-confident, and all the springs of his being swelled to the glory of the conception.

Suddenly, across the middle of the design, as it were, a shadow fell, and ruthless hands were laid upon the scroll. Men in the East began saying things which could not be answered. They published the secret treaties, which still remained in operation as the basis of Allied war-policy. These men pointed out that it would be impossible to bring the war to a fair and practicable conclusion while these treaties remained in operation. They demanded repudiation as the price of their adherence to the war. When the treaties were not repudiated, they withdrew from the war. They even accused Mr. Wilson of hypocrisy, saying that his fine principles were mere humbug, since he refused to take the only action which could bring these principles to fulfillment. On every hand, they both demanded and practised action instead of words. They were actually doing many of the things which Mr. Wilson had only talked about. They were stealing his thunder.

Confound these rude fellows, their conduct was outrageous! These delicate matters had been reserved for the peace conference. The question of the secret treaties would be cleared up then. It was necessary only to trust him implicitly, to leave it all in his hands. If they were not careful, they would stop the war in the middle; how, then, could America rescue Europe, how could he develop the power which was to save the world? Yes, yes, this and that were very true, he knew it perfectly well; but these things were not to be spoken of till the time came. He had it properly planned, exactly as it should be done. They were spoiling the picture, wrecking the design, smudging the scroll. Let them be still.

But they could not be still; the urge of a hundred and fifty million suffering people drove them on, and, in

the main, it was truth which they were saying. That was what made it unforgivable. The liberal opinion of the world began to follow the Russian argument, began to recognize that there was logic in it. Russia had called the bluff of the democratic crusade. Where a short while before had existed only praise for Mr. Wilson, there now began to appear searching criticism of his policies, mingled with praise for new men, his rivals in the arena of history. As time went on the cleavage widened, until at length it grew too wide to bridge with words.

The hero-myth can brook no rivals. Out upon these annoying upstarts! Such was the condition of President Wilson's spirit in the spring of 1918. He himself knows nothing of it; he would be the last man in the world to understand it. But little by little he came to see the Soviet manifestation in a new light. The Russian people were right at heart, the Bolsheviks might not be so black as they were painted, the whole manifestation might well be an inevitable overturn of all that went with the old Tsarist autocracy; and this could be supported, except for these impossible fellows who had seized the power. They, however, had gone too far, were too objectionable, had already demonstrated their lack of judgment and discretion; and as long as the Russian people permitted them to remain in power, the Russian people would have to take the consequences.

The publication of the secret treaties annoyed and exasperated Mr. Wilson more, perhaps, than he fully realized. He knew that the secret treaties existed; although it is true that he had neither the opportunity nor the inclination to examine their terms. Such was his capacity for self-delusion that he dismissed them lightly, as, indeed, he dismissed many important considerations of that period, with the resolve that all should be unearthed at the peace conference and with the perfect faith that all would be well where he sat in judgment. In short, the secret treaties were to be ignored until the war had been won. There were no secret treaties. The aims of our Allies were high and righteous altogether, and from him no secrets were hid. It was a holy war. To think otherwise was to impair our effectiveness. Dismiss the doubt. Have faith in him. On with the war.

To have the actual treaties flaunted in the face of the world in the midst of this rhapsody, was nothing short of infuriating. Could not these troublesome people see that he was doing everything within reason, that they were making his path doubly difficult? If they kept on with these scandalous breaches of international etiquette, he soon would be unable to help them at all. He did not want to cast them out—but they were incorrigible! In the same breath, they were doing Russia a great disservice and himself a deep injury. . . . Little did Mr. Wilson realize that, in reality, these men in the East were trying to do him the greatest service of his career! Little did he foresee the day when his pseudo-liberalism should be the hope and the strength of reaction; when, after the secret treaties had swamped him at Versailles, and the holy war had ended in the lust of conquest, he should feel called upon, under a shocking accumulation of error, to lie publicly before the world, denying that he ever had known of these agreements until he went to Paris. Had he followed Lenin and Trotzky in this matter, he might have saved the war and the world; he would, at any rate, have saved his own soul.

As for Mr. Wilson's inhibition against socialism, this is more easily understandable. It had always existed, yet had not been called forth at once in the case of Soviet Russia, since Mr. Wilson, like many others at that time, did not at first understand that the Bolshevik

Revolution was dedicated to the principles of socialism. He knew, and probably knows to-day, little more about socialism than the average American citizen of the old school. He had never considered the matter seriously. Over and above his ignorance, however, rests the fact that socialism is an economic doctrine, and the further fact that Mr. Wilson possesses an extremely limited sense of economic values. This, indeed, is his chief intellectual lack; in a scientific sense, he is incapable of comprehending what socialism is driving at. The whole question lies out of his native sphere, and for that reason he finds the subject distasteful to him.

In January of 1918, a week after the Fourteen Points speech, I talked with Mr. Wilson for half an hour about socialism, and came away with the impression that he, in company with millions of good but ignorant people, believed the doctrine to be nothing more than a proposal to divide the possessions of the haves among the have-nots. "Socialism is much like Christianity, fair in theory but extremely difficult in practice," he said easily. "There never yet has been a successful socialist regime, you know." Which was very true, because a socialist regime had never before been tried.

I would not claim that these were the sole reasons for Mr. Wilson's change of heart towards Soviet Russia; but, from an intimate observation of the case, I am convinced that they are the main reasons. They are sufficient, at any rate, to satisfy the argument; to explain why it was that the note to Japan of February, 1918, was never given to the world; to understand why, in spite of a powerful intellectual impulse towards the right course in Russia, the final step was never taken. When we take into account the rest of the story; the stupendous volume of official pressure which throughout the spring of 1918 flowed into the White House from every quarter of the world, all of it calling for support of counter-revolution in Russia; the incident of the Czechoslovakian troops in Siberia, tied up as it was with French intrigue and policy; the alarming course of the war on the Western front, as the German offensive of 1918 shook the Allied line, and the consequent bitterness against Russia, whose defection on the Eastern front, it was felt, had made the drive possible; the increasing criticism in influential circles of the principles and practices of Bolshevism, as the organized world of capitalism began to gather itself against the new enemy; the streams of adverse propaganda which flowed in columns through the press; the equally persistent and effective streams of propaganda favouring military intervention in Siberia and North Russia; the acceptable methods, plausible arguments and high diplomatic connexions of the Russian counter-revolutionary organization; the desperate means which had to be adopted by the Soviet Government during this period in order to maintain its position; the call of tradition and the influence of environment: when we consider all this, it seems remarkable that Mr. Wilson, being the man he was, held out so long against the easier course, that his intellect argued the point so long with his weaker inclinations.

LINCOLN COLCORD.

#### A STUDY IN LITERARY CRITICISM.

My observations concerning the literary temper, published in a recent issue of this paper,<sup>1</sup> have had, in one respect, a hard fate. For some reason which I can not discern, they have been taken as disparaging our younger writers of fiction. One of my critics, Mr. Lewis Mumford, speaks of my "general characterization of

<sup>1</sup> "A Study in Literary Temper" by Albert Jay Nock, the *Freeman*, 26 January, 1921, pp. 464-7.

our younger writers; their lack of disinterestedness, their irritability, their failure in tenderness." This is astonishing; it makes one think that Dr. Eliot must be right in saying that very few Americans can see straight. I mentioned by name four of our younger writers, and characterized them as men of ability, energy and integrity; I said not another word about them. For their benefit, I pointed out certain failures in their literary predecessors of my own generation; but of themselves and their own work I said nothing.

Moreover, it is precisely because I have, or think I have, so thoroughly "penetrated into the predicament of the younger generation in America to-day," which I am charged with not having done, that I took this course. The trouble with the younger generation is that criticism has done nothing for them. My own generation had the same trouble, and the younger generation are having it intensified. The creative artist in America has been under a throttling disability, largely because criticism in America has stood at such a low level. Hence, if there be any blame going, it attaches to criticism rather than to the artist; and anyone who has regard to the function of criticism must, it seems to me, survey his own responsibility in the premises with an uneasiness and despondency which leaves him little will to be severe with the artist or, indeed, with anyone but himself. Suppose, for example, that when I read Mr. Sinclair Lewis's new book, I should be disappointed; not that I shall be, not that I expect to be, but suppose the case: I should at once be obliged to ask myself whose fault it is. I have known Mr. Sinclair Lewis for years; we are good friends; and yet, with such resources of criticism as are at my disposal, be they great or small, I have never published one line which would help him towards writing a good book or, which is much more important, towards *wishing* to write a good book; and the professional critics, if one may so designate them, have as far as I know, done little more than I have done.

The work, say, of Mr. More, Mr. Babbitt, Mr. Brownell, Mr. Sherman—taking a few names more or less at random—seems chiefly concerned with establishing a position and fortifying itself in that position. This is a part, and a great part, of the function of criticism, and no one would disparage it. But there is no danger that it will ever be underdone, because in asserting a position one asserts oneself, and one always likes to do that. Criticism has other business, however, which does not fall in so well with the natural impulse to self-assertion, and therefore is likely to be neglected. Its business is to help the artist, the writer; not only by providing him with examples of great art and by competently analysing and expounding these examples, but more, far more, by *prepossessing* him, by interesting him in classic work, by awakening his feeling for it and helping him to see for himself how lovely and delightful it is, and to anticipate the satisfaction that comes of a sincere and enthusiastic effort to emulate it.

Lessing and Herder did this sort of thing in Germany; Goethe did it. Wordsworth did so little of it that one wishes he had done more; but what he did is invaluable. After an attentive study of Wordsworth's prefaces, no young versifier will ever again versify quite as he did before; let him try it and see. These critics were as much as any interested in establishing a sound philosophical position for criticism; but while doing this, they did not leave undone what is, after all, the weightier matter of helping, encouraging and animating the creative artist, and promoting his enthusiasm for the best work of which he is capable. American critics, on the other hand, have laboured abundantly

for the philosophy of criticism; but for all I know of their work, they have not recognized the "fellow-striver, fellow-worker" in the creative artist, and have done little to affect his purpose or his will.

Let me give an illustration to indicate what I mean. When Mr. Arnold held the Oxford Chair of Poetry, he delivered a course on translating Homer. He went through the business of translating Homer, showing just how it should be done, and finally even gave specimen passages of his own translating to illustrate his doctrine. One may possibly dispute some of his positions, or one might even say that a metrical translation of Homer is not worth doing; but however all this may be, his essay remains an example of first-class critical *method*, the method that American criticism should have been employing for years, and has never employed; and because American criticism has never employed it, the younger generation is in a predicament far more difficult than the wholly imaginary predicament so vividly conjured up by Mr. Mumford.

The one point of excellence upon which I wish particularly to dwell is that Mr. Arnold's method somehow manages to get the reader to do what he wants him to do; it stirs and prepossesses the reader's intellectual curiosity. Very few there are, I think, of those who can read Greek, who have not at one time or another been seduced by this essay into the experiment of translating a passage or two from Homer for themselves. Put any student of Homer through the third degree, and ten to one he will finally break down and confess that after reading Mr. Arnold, he carried off his Homer into some deep nocturnal privacy and then and there did surreptitiously and insidiously produce a couple of hundred lines of literary contraband on Mr. Arnold's specifications, just as a "flyer," as one might say. Mr. Arnold not only tells one what to do, and how, but manages to infect one with a pestering desire to do it; and this is the acme of critical method.

On the other hand, I have just been reading Mr. Sherman's paper called "The National Genius," in the *Atlantic Monthly* for January. Perhaps the gist of it may be fairly drawn from its concluding words: that the true emancipator of our art "will always understand that his task is not to set Beauty and Puritanism at loggerheads, but to make Puritanism beautiful." Well, this is a hard task, as hard perhaps, as translating Homer. One may also have one's own opinion whether it is worth doing. But it is a project that has always interested Mr. Sherman, and one can see how he might communicate a considerable measure of his interest to some eager creative spirit. Puritanism, indeed, has a very amiable and attractive side, rather overshadowed by the prominence of other sides of its being; and a good critic could bring this out and effectively recommend it. This has been done before; and with no very special knowledge of the subject, and no great amount of enthusiasm for it, I think that I myself see how it might be done again. Mr. Sherman, however, does not do this. He not only fails to show how one should set about the task of making Puritanism beautiful, but manages to give one a positive distaste for doing anything with it. The tone and temper of his recommendation are such as to make one wholly impatient with Puritanism and with Mr. Sherman himself, and wish that they would both disappear in one another's company. In this important respect, Mr. Sherman's criticism seems to be typically of the sort that America has always had; and Mr. Arnold's seems typically of the sort that America has always most needed.

I am borne out in this opinion by Mr. Mumford when he cites the drift of Dickens, Morris, Mr. Bertrand Russell and Artzybashev towards sociology, and says that the facts concomitant to this drift are germane to a discussion of the plight of our younger writers in America. I should think they are; and if American criticism had been up to its work, our younger writers would be in no such plight. Criticism should have been continually relating all the arts under the few and simple first principles of fundamental economics. It should have been pointing out how the very failure to do this turned adrift the four writers whom Mr. Mumford cites, and left them to the mercy of a hamstrung and sentimental sociology; and how the writers who follow them might learn to do better. Then on the positive side, it should have been holding up and expounding the merit of the men of letters who even in those days and without the help of criticism, managed to make themselves what one might call primitive economists, who somehow got themselves grounded in the elementary principles of economics. Think what American criticism might have done for our younger writers by proper treatment of two only, out of many: Hardy and Turgenev. These men somehow made themselves aware that: *Man is a land-animal; he derives his subsistence wholly from the land; he tends to satisfy his needs and desires with the least possible exertion; he has the natural right of free access to the source of his subsistence.* Therefore they were not all abroad and at loose ends in our civilization; they were not bowled out of their self-possession by the sight of our great industrial towns; because they perceived at once that the fundamental problem of human society is the same in the remotest village as it is in Pittsburgh or Birmingham, and that those, like Kingsley and others of their contemporaries who were distractedly fiddling with an impotent and tearful sociology, were really mending nothing, setting nothing straight, but on the contrary, leaving matters worse than they found them.

In this, its most important function, however, American criticism has not as yet done a hand's turn; and hence we have Mr. Mumford deliberately speaking of "Ruskin's abandonment of art-criticism for economics." Think of it—for economics! Or, no; think rather that there has been no competent literary criticism in America these thirty years to keep impressing upon us the dreadful fact that economics has suffered at no man's hands, probably, as it has at Ruskin's. Think that there has been no criticism to keep before our eyes the picture of aesthetics and economics weeping on one another's shoulder on the day when Ruskin's thoughts turned from the Slade Professorship of Fine Arts to potter with the sociologists and pragmatists and practitioners in liberal reform. No wonder that so many of our younger writers are declaring, "We are all sociologists now." Alas, they are right; but whose fault is it?

For myself, I see nothing but that our younger writers—among whom let me name again, this time in terms which can leave no possible doubt of my great regard and respect, Mr. Frank, Mr. Dell, Mr. Anderson and Mr. Sinclair Lewis—should demand better criticism. Let them turn upon me and upon all of my sort who have more or less to do with criticism, and say, "You have done nothing to help us; you have done nothing but let us flounder into a puzzle and a mess; now change your tune and give us something that we can use. Go back over your resources of 'the best that has been thought and said in the world' and fish out something upon which we can form and season ourselves, show us what to do with it, and *make us like it.*"

Or, still better, let them develop, out of their own number, good critics who shall see where our work has failed and fallen out of balance, and shall do better. This is the best way to serve the future, and the ranks of our younger men hold excellent raw material for the purpose. But let them be sure to do better than we have done; let them not overmuch mind about expounding the philosophy of criticism, establishing positions and fortifying themselves in those positions.<sup>1</sup> We who precede them have done enough of that to last a long time, and by now, I dare say, are not fit to undertake anything else. So if any more of it needs doing, it might better perhaps be left to us. *Sine ut mortui sepeliant mortuos suos; tu autem vade et adnuntia regnum Dei!*

ALBERT JAY NOCK.

## LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

### THE QUESTION OF RECOGNITION.

SIRS: The other day an American newspaper-man asked me—here in London—what I thought would be Moscow's reaction to President Wilson's dictum on Armenia and Russia.

I smiled. "I doubt," said I, "if there will be anything you can call a reaction. They just won't be interested."

It was a pretty good shot. A few hours later the *Daily Herald* published a cable from Mr. H. S. Alsberg in Moscow. "President Wilson's declaration," it began, "has aroused a mild curiosity in governmental circles here."

So it is with the State Department's declaration that it will not join with the Supreme Council in extending *de jure* recognition to Estonia, Latvia and Georgia. Nobody in London is really much interested in the pronouncement. There is "mild curiosity," a certain surprise that President Wilson—still regarded in certain quarters as the only begetter of the doctrine of self-determination—should be playing this queer rôle. The new States are recognized by Russia: they are recognized by the Allies: they are recognized by Germany. Only America won't recognize them! Heaven—and, I imagine, M. Boris Bakmetiev—knows why.

Of course, the *de jure* recognition of the border States is a move towards the recognition of the Soviet Government itself, though I doubt if the Supreme Council realizes this. I doubt if it sees the implications of its own action. But the implications are there just the same, for all the tenable arguments that can be advanced against recognition of the Russian Republic apply with equal force to the case of Estonia and the other little States.

The Russian Republic is a daughter of violent revolution: so are the border Republics. If three years have not sufficed to prove the stability of the one, how can they be sufficient to prove the stability of the others? Soviet Russia has not accepted liability for any part of the Tsarist debt. Nor has Estonia or Latvia or Georgia. Nor, indeed, have Poland and Finland. Yet by all the canons of international law, and by every rule of equity, they should bear their proportional share of the obligation of the old Empire. The responsibility of a citizen of Reval for the Tsar's debts is precisely as great, or as small, or as non-existent, as that of a citizen of Moscow. If the Government of Reval can repudiate and yet be recognized, why not the Government of Moscow?

The retort that the Soviet Government can not be recognized until it shall have proved that it is truly representative of the Russian people is quite unconvincing. In the first place, no such test is ever imposed. The internal organization of a State is its own concern. The Tsar and the Sultan were recognized. The Mikado is recognized to-day. The Kaiser's Germany was, accord-

<sup>1</sup> Let them be particularly stepmotherly with the kind of thing, for instance, that Mr. Mumford himself undertook in the *Freeman* for 2 March, under the title "Towards a Humanist Synthesis."

ing to all Allied statesmen, a brutal military autocracy. But they made no bones about recognizing it. Even if all the allegations about Soviet tyranny were true, Russia would have no worse claim than these.

In the second place, these allegations are not true. The Soviet system, with its indirect elections, and its constantly and flexibly operating system of recall, is different from the parliamentary system. It is at least debatable whether it is not even more truly representative. The Russian electoral law deprives certain classes of the suffrage. The British and American law did until recently—the French law does still—exclude a whole sex. There is no room for stone-throwing here, let alone for non-recognition.

All the plausible arguments have collapsed. With the fall of General Wrangel it can not even be urged that the Soviet authorities must not be recognized as the Russian Government because there is somewhere else a legitimate claimant to that title. To-day there is no other Russian Government anywhere visible. There is a little ragtag and bobtail of "Ambassadors" and "Consuls"; but there is no longer anybody whom they can pretend to represent. There is no other Russian Government than the Soviet Government in Moscow. Russia quite undeniably exists and functions as a State. How then can we any longer avoid recognizing the palpably existent?

The absurdity of the situation is beginning at last to permeate our statesmen's minds. They do not like the idea of recognizing the Soviet Government. They are still jibbing. They will delay as long as may be. But they begin to see that it is inevitable, and they are getting ready to swallow the pill.

Here in England recognition may come very soon. At the moment at which I am writing we are still awaiting Moscow's reply to, and comments on, the British draft of the Trade Agreement. There is no hint as to what that reply will be. Only we know that they have been debating the matter—debating it exhaustively during three whole days. By the time you get this letter we shall all know the outcome of that discussion. I can only hazard the prophecy that one or two of the British conditions Moscow will refuse outright: that Mr. Krassin will come back: that there will be further discussion: and that, in the end, the British Government will yield and the Agreement will be signed. If it is signed, recognition must follow swiftly. That has been decided already by the judgment of Mr. Justice Roche in the Sagar case. He has left the Government no alternative.

The issue in that case was simple. Certain timber, formerly the property of a Petrograd firm, had been confiscated by the Soviet Government. It was sent to England and sold by Mr. Krassin to Mr. Sagar. The original owners claimed it as their property. The facts were agreed. The case turned upon this question. Was the confiscation of the timber a legal act? The question of its morality could not enter. Was it legal? Clearly, if the Soviet Government was a sovereign government, the confiscation was legal. A government has as much right—legal right—to confiscate timber as to levy taxes. Is the Soviet Government a government in the eyes of the English courts? Is it recognized?

That was the question Mr. Justice Roche had to ask himself. He answered it, as some of us believe, quite rightly. The leading cases and the international jurists are quite definite on the point. A court of law can only recognize a foreign Government if its own Government does so. The judge declared, therefore, that he could not recognize the Soviet Government or take cognizance of its acts. He gave judgment against Mr. Sagar. The timber must be restored to its original owner.

That decision came as a bombshell. The British Government had hoped to put the Trade Agreement through and to commence trade with Russia without extending recognition. It had hoped—though on what ground it is hard to conceive—for a different judgment. It is now up against this difficulty. Until it recognizes the Russian Government the courts will not take cognizance of the acts of that Government. And unless the courts do take

such cognizance, no Russian goods or gold brought to this country in the course of trade will be secure. Already creditors of the old Tsarist Government are threatening to apply for writs of garnishee against the first gold brought here. If the Sagar judgment holds and the Soviet Government is not recognized, they will win their case. Trade under such circumstances will be obviously impossible.

Downing Street is perplexed—looking for a way out of the difficulty. In the preamble draft-agreement as it stood when the Sagar judgment was delivered, there was a phrase declaring that the signature of the agreement should not be deemed to affect the view held by either party of the legal status of the other. That phrase was hastily deleted by Mr. Lloyd George himself. Now the Premier and his colleagues are waiting, still hoping to avoid a formal act of recognition. Prejudice still stands in the way. King George, it is said, is obstinate in unwillingness. But he will have to give way, or there can be no Russian trade, for even kings have to yield when trade is at stake.

There are two—and, as far as I can see—only two, possible solutions. Either the Courts will declare that the signature of the agreement in itself implies and involves recognition, or else they will hold that a formal declaration of recognition is necessary. In that case a formal declaration must and will be made, whatever King George or Lord Curzon may think about it.

Recognition by Great Britain, then, is coming: not perhaps, *de jure* recognition, but *de facto* recognition anyway, and, given "*de facto*," nobody except the pedants is going to worry about "*de jure*."

What is America going to do then? President Harding will have to decide. He will have big prejudices to overcome. But he will be in the same predicament as Mr. Lloyd George. He will find that if America is going to trade with Russia, America must recognize Russia. Probably the American courts would take precisely the same view as Mr. Justice Roche. Moreover, I am confident (I have no information, but I think I know something of the psychology of the Soviet leaders), that once trade is opened with Great Britain, Russia will not make an agreement with any other country except on the basis of recognition. Given trade with Great Britain, Russia will not need to trade with the States. She will be willing to do so, but she will not urgently need to do so. She will make her terms, and recognition will be one of them.

That is the choice your new Administration will have to make. It can indulge its prejudices and win the approval of M. Boris Bakhmetiev and his friends, or it can have a share in trade with the valuable Russian market. It can not do both. If America won't recognize a Communist Government, America won't be able to do business with a Communist people. That's all there is to be said. I am, etc.,

London, Eng/and.

W. N. EWER.

## MISCELLANY.

Now that the twentieth century has reached its majority, events that happened before 1900 begin to take on a misty radiance. As one forgets in retrospect the fatigues and annoyances of travel, so do the irritations of daily life sink out of sight as one looks backward. We no longer see the uneven ground which made the journey difficult, but are comforted by the vision of peak and upland which now partake of "the voluptuous melancholy of distance." Some such thoughts as these were aroused by a bundle of old letters, written in the old days when one went to England to indulge the human passion for natural beauty and to enjoy the sensation of continuity in life, to say nothing of the pleasure of idly dreaming while the larks fly upward. It all came back to me as I read—the trip from Lynmouth to Cardiff in the red-funnelled steamer, the forgotten umbrellas, the arrival at the Beaumont Arms whose mullioned windows look across at the quiet ruins of Tintern Abbey.

"We came here," ran one of the letters, "from Lynmouth on Monday, and we feel as much inclined to stay as the hedge which lifts sprout after sprout to gaze at the Abbey. I never knew of a place that afforded so many excuses for a life of inaction. There are plenty of enchanting walks, woods alive with rabbits, meadows over which the larks seem to hover in perpetual song, and from the Wyndcliff the eye ranges over a sea of foliage to the Wye and the Severn beyond, or in the western distance catches the outline of the Welsh mountains. But just to lean against the ivy in front of the Inn, like a workhouse-gaffer, and study the ruins and the republic of rooks who have inherited the remains of the abode of the Cistercians, seems occupation enough. The rooks form a delightful community, and their costume is all that it should be, but in some ways I fear they violate the traditions of the order, by their disregard of sacerdotal celibacy and their frequent infringement of the rule of silence! Beside these unvarying objects of contemplation, if one demands excitement, one has but to await the arrival or departure of guests, the sudden appearance of a motor, and the approach of the hour of tea, when people drift in and come to anchor at small, green tables placed in patches of shadow upon the lawn, and a very stylish waiter walks out with tray after tray and pockets his sixpenny tips with a lordly air of condescension."

No doubt Wordsworth has cast a spell about the name of Tintern, but there is in the names of English places a native magic that defies analysis. Loughrigg and Scawfell Pike, Coventry Bower and the Queen o' Dart, Beau-lieu and Boscombe! Would English roses smell as sweet if they adorned the gardens of Brown's Mills or bloomed on the slopes of Robinson Mountain? I doubt it. Here is a letter in a different hand, written in days when the bicycle offered an alternative to the fly as a means of conveyance. The month is April: "On Saturday we started after lunch for an eight-mile jaunt to Chewton Bunny. We spun along the good level road, past Christchurch surrounded by green meadows and the two swift streams, and all the meadows golden with kingcups. We stopped before an engaging signpost which announced that tea could be had at the farm down the lane, and that this was Chewton Farm. So down we went and ordered tea. While it was being got ready we went down the Bunny, which is another name for Chine, a little ravine with a brook at the bottom and primrose and ivy-covered banks. We had our tea under an oak and sat on the daisy-covered grass while a golden-haired little girl waited on us and made us 'curtsey bobs' as if we had been royalty. Then we walked once more along the enchanting Bunny. E. was, of course, wild with delight and leaped along the primrose paths and down the sides of the stream gathering great bunches of flowers; we could hardly get him away to cross the downs beyond which led us to the cliffs, and there we had a wonderful view of Hengistbury Head and the hills beyond Swanage and the Isle of Wight in front of us, looking so near it seemed as if we could throw a stone across the still, opalescent water and the Needles. We left reluctantly; it was all so beautiful. Our ride back was by another and even more beautiful road, and we got home at half past seven—broad daylight. E. had done the sixteen miles and all the walking there without much fatigue, and was not even cross the next day! . . . ."

INDEED, it would seem hard to wake up cross in a "delicious cottage," entered by "a little gate through a high hedge," and "surrounded by beds of forget-me-nots, polyanthus and pansies," the lawn leading to a little river "about twelve feet wide" whose further bank was fledged with a primrose-studded coppice of alders. To be waked by the birds at seven "and lie in bed revelling in it all till eight," when tea comes and a bath; to be waited on by "smiling, pink-frocked English maids," to arrange cowslips "in the adorable green jars that fill the drawing-room"; and to write home about it all sitting in a large chair on the lawn while the boys play cricket round the corner—this was England before the days of Armaged-

don. No doubt the English mountains are as fair as ever; the innumerable becks that streak the flanks of Fairfield after a night of showers, fill the air with as glad a melody as in the days gone by; the river banks are no less crowded with daffodils or the woods with blue-bells, and the magic of the sun-lit English clouds is as potent as ever; but the spirit of the dream is troubled.

JOURNEYMAN.

## THE THEATRE.

### STANDS SCOTLAND WHERE IT DID?

I WAS not present at the opening night of Mr. Arthur Hopkins's much-heralded production of *Macbeth*; accordingly, I had read what was written about this production before I saw it, and was mentally prepared to find a scenic investiture so bizarre and so attention-compelling that William Shakespeare was quite forgotten, hence the failure of the play. What I actually found, however, seemed to me something rather different. That the scenic investiture was bizarre and attention-compelling, I will admit; but I have seen Shakespeare played with every kind of scenery, and with no scenery at all, and seldom enough did the scenery have much to do, one way of the other, with the success or failure of the play. What I found in the present case was very nearly the worst acting in a so-called first-class Shakespearean production that it has ever, in over thirty years of theatre-going, been my misfortune to witness. This production of *Macbeth* would have failed if Mr. Belasco had designed the scenery in his best realistic manner. The "new art of the theatre," about which we hear so much, will get nowhere unless it recognizes the still supreme old art of acting. It will certainly get nowhere in Shakespeare.

It may be quite true that Shakespeare has to be interpreted for each age. So, doubtless, do Pike's Peak and the Grand Cañon. But Pike's Peak remains an exceeding high mountain, and the Grand Cañon an exceeding deep hole. Shakespeare remains an exceeding great poet, whose characters are of heroic mould, whose language is exalted speech, whose situations are tense with the clash of elemental forces. Few characters of Shakespeare's are of more heroic mould than *Macbeth* and his steely spouse, few roll betimes a more majestic music in their speech, few crash with more tremendous impact on to their fate. Properly to interpret *Macbeth*, amid any scenery or no scenery, the actor to-day, no less than the actor of yesterday, must have at his command the suggestion of heroic mould, the vocal resources commensurate with the poetry, and an emotional sensitiveness as great as the emotions he is called upon to create. Mr. Lionel Barrymore's complete unfitness for his task, in all these respects, was almost as ludicrous as it was pathetic. The only thing heroic about his performance was his self-assurance in attempting it. His brother Mr. John Barrymore last year essayed the far easier rôle of *Richard III*, displaying much more emotional sensitiveness, and infinitely greater command over the problems of poetic speech. Mr. Robert Edmond Jones's settings for "*Richard III*" were everywhere acclaimed. Actually, of course, they had a certain solidity of realism which the "*Macbeth*" settings lack, but at that they carried suggestion to a disturbing degree. The step into complete suggestion could have been accomplished, at least for a great many imaginative spectators, if the actors could have kept pace with Mr. Jones, and the result would have been something strange and memorable—a kind of black and scarlet nightmare of murder and doom, seen

under a searchlight flare to the troubled music of Shakespeare's verse.

But in this "Macbeth" the actors—and perhaps the producer—were quite incapable of keeping the pace. Not alone Mr. Barrymore, with his ape-like crouchings and distorted speech, but all the cast, with one or two honourable exceptions (as the Banquo of Mr. Sidney Herbert), were pygmies in a giant's boots. Duncan colloquially droned; Macduff roused the castle in such weak fashion that not a nerve in the audience was troubled; Miss Julia Arthur, even, though she was trained to speak verse clearly and rhythmically, bid plaintively for our sympathies. Shades of Charlotte Cushman! The knocking at the gate was a soft rapping on the scenery, not the startling clang of Fate. Scenery? What has scenery to do with this? Macbeth is thrilling on a bare stage—when it is acted thrillingly. When it is not properly acted, when pygmies strive to round its giant measures, it is bound to fail, no matter what the scenic conditions.

As a matter of fact, Mr. Jones's strange, symbolic setting, which in the banquet scene, for instance, achieved a haunting beauty and an almost overpowering suggestion of cold, twisted evil, would have captured most imaginations to his conception, even under existing conditions, if he had begun on a note of half-realism, and gradually mounted to his pure suggestion. The first shock of a castle composed of enormous cardboard molars under a searchlight beam is too great, and in too startling contrast to Duncan's quiet remark,

This castle hath a pleasant seat. . . .

with the sudden little nature picture crooning out of the following dialogue. Thereafter, as the play progressively sweeps the imagination into its turbid current, the setting may well rise to pure suggestion, and carry the spectators willingly with it.

Nevertheless, it is a daring, an imaginative, and at times a hauntingly beautiful work of scenic art which Mr. Jones has created, a work not unworthy of the poem which inspired it. To say he was to blame for the failure of "Macbeth" is to mistake utterly the basic element in the creation of the proper illusion for such drama in the theatre—the element of poetic and heroic acting. Without such acting Shakespeare never has succeeded and never will succeed.

WALTER PRICHARD EATON.

WITH a courage and daring which we like to think is characteristically American but which we are prone to belittle when it appears, Mr. Arthur Hopkins and Mr. Robert Edmund Jones have made a production of "Macbeth," with Mr. Lionel Barrymore and Miss Julia Arthur in the leading rôles, which departs so radically from the traditional methods of the theatre that it has brought down upon itself a storm of ridicule, bewilderment and misunderstanding, tempered by the eager and sympathetic approval of a minority. Scattered here and there among the confused and sometimes irritated visitors to the Apollo Theatre have been a few who have not only recognized the boldness of the experiment but, with certain exacting reservations, have welcomed it as proof that the American theatre is able and ready to think originally and to create independently of artists and impulses from overseas. Upheld by the imaginative vision of Mr. Jones, Mr. Hopkins in this production has been bold enough in the midst of Broadway to put to shame all the pretensions of the secessionists who

affect a scorn for the commercial theatre, by out-experimenting the experimenters. Unsatisfied to dally with expedients or evolutionary processes, he has advanced at one leap into a new æsthetic, confident of his goal but strangely heedless of the encumbrances which he was carrying along with him from the old.

This new æsthetic may be defined as an attempt to appeal to the emotions and the imagination through the abstractions of mood and feeling, and to portray these moods and feelings as the background for the action of the play rather than to particularize that background in the guise of either a literal or a symbolic representation of *local*. This kind of theatre, of course, stands at the furthest pole from the old theatre of realism; it proceeds far beyond the symbolic theatre where typical and generic objects still represent specific things and places. The theatre of abstraction has nothing whatever to do with representation; it does not seek to create the illusion of reality; it is not even interested in the picture-puzzle technique of symbolism; it demands no speculation as to whether a crooked stick is intended to be a tree or a gallows or a cross; it is concerned merely with the mood and feeling which its visible and audible instruments can arouse.

Just as in any form of æsthetic expression, the artist who uses abstraction as his medium must convey his meaning to the audience; he must induce them to feel as he has felt; he must make his intentions clear without the use of a dictionary or a guide-book. Naturally, he can not expect an indiscriminate audience to comprehend him readily. We have thought too long in terms of a realistic ideology to turn quickly and easily and without self-consciousness to the imagery of abstraction. The artist who expresses himself in this form of æsthetic will have to be on his guard against hiding behind this unfamiliarity as an excuse for muddy, incoherent expression. His audience, on the other hand, must understand that the concrete form of reaction will vary with different individuals and that the artist has achieved his purpose if he makes his audience feel the same abstract emotion which has inspired him.

In the light of the impelling motive of Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Jones, as thus stated, the several phases of their production of "Macbeth" assume definite significance. Brilliant illumination against dark shadows stimulate the emotions. Distorted suggestions of wall and doorway and throne, used not for their own sake or as symbols but as stimuli to a mood, guide the aroused emotions into the channel of ominous dread of impending tragedy. That, indeed, has always been the mood of "Macbeth." Mr. Hopkins and Mr. Jones have merely tried to emphasize it and make it potent in a new way. The witches are made into abstractions of fatalism by appearing in masks, a note which is stressed by the spectacle of three colossal silver masks in the black void above. Irregular screens at one side of the stage, pierced by pointed arches, connote not so much the castle as the mood of minds distorted by murderous ambitions. Their placement at increasingly toppling angles in succeeding scenes suggests the intensifying of this mood. The leaning, unsymmetrical shapes behind the throne and the candlesticks askew on the banquet-tables seem to imply the crumbling of Macbeth's power. The pointed white screens, cross-

barred and transparent, which stand about the stage in the sleep-walking scene, are less decisive in their abstract ideology, but by their resemblance in shape to the arches of the earlier scenes they seem to be intended to emphasize the pent-up terror of Lady Macbeth shut within her bloody memories. Probably the most impressive and intrinsically beautiful image in the entire production is the tall, tapering white pillar enclosing and rising above the ember glow which reveals the witches and apparitions of Macbeth's final seance, implying, perhaps, the king's devotion at a ritual fire and heightening the feeling of his dependence on fatalistic guidance.

Costumes, movement and music contribute in varying degree to the interpretation by abstraction which Mr. Jones has carried throughout his scenic background. It may be just as well that this first excursion into a new field has not pursued its aim too relentlessly. Innovations in art by complete revolution are just as confusing as in economics and politics. At any rate, for better or for worse, Mr. Jones has retained a link with the readily comprehensible in his costumes, contenting himself with such devices as clashing shades of red contrasting with vivid blue in Lady Macbeth's robes, although he could just as well have taken the grotesque note of the scenery this further step with startling effect. Movement and grouping on the stage are formalized enough to harmonize with the *mise en scène*, though this formalization is not pushed to extremes. The music score by Mr. Robert Russell Bennett, which is more or less continuous, has no melody or harmony in itself but forms an emotional accompaniment to the action, especially in the ominous introductory phrases and the dissonant rhythms of the last two scenes.

This production of "Macbeth," however, as an *étude* in abstraction falls short of its ambitious goal in two chief respects; one of them remediable, and the other inherent in the material chosen. In a perfect fusion of all the elements in the art of the theatre, the acting would have been keyed to the setting and therefore to the fundamental note of the production; it would have been removed from the realm of realism in keeping with the exaggeration demanded by that note. Instead, the only player who apparently attempts this exaggeration, Mr. Barrymore, falls into the pit of the old, florid elocution, missing completely the mood of abstraction and formality. The rest of the cast, notably Miss Julia Arthur as Lady Macbeth, reach a high standard of realistic characterization, but their work is not keyed with this production and would have been just as effective under conventional conditions. The inherent difficulty lies in the play itself. "Macbeth" is probably the most amenable of all Shakespeare's plays to interpretation by abstraction; but, at the same time, it is too structurally episodic to permit the evocation of a tense, unbroken mood, and it is too long for such a mood to be endured even if it could be sustained. In the absence of new plays written in the light of these new theories, Shakespeare has been requisitioned once again, although the aesthetic of abstraction was far from his thought.

The outstanding aspect of this significant production, after all, is the fact that the American theatre has at last disclosed an experiment of serious and commanding proportions. We have talked a great deal about the need for experiment and for

the replacement of realistic representation by newer methods, about the opportunities of the newer aesthetic and the barrenness of our theatre as contrasted with the theatres of Moscow and Berlin. Now, without any blaring of trumpets, we find ourselves unexpectedly in possession of what we have been asking for. What are we going to do with it? If we are wise, we shall regard it as an honest and able if not wholly successful experiment and by attempting to understand it give encouragement to that further experimentation which may ensure lasting results.

OLIVER M. SAYLER.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITORS.

### MEDICAL RELIEF FOR SOVIET RUSSIA.

SIRS: A cablegram from Russia has just been received by the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee. It reads as follows: "Send Literature regarding Tuberculosis. Also Vaccines." This is an appeal from a people, struggling against disease and death, for information and preventive medicines.

Anti-tuberculosis vaccines to the amount of \$5000 are available for purchase at this time. The amount will furnish approximately five million doses with which to fight tuberculosis in Soviet Russia. This shipment can be prepared and made ready within the next two weeks, provided we can collect the necessary five thousand dollars.

Speed is the essence of success in this fight of the Russian people against the dread disease. All who are in sympathy with the work of helping Soviet Russia to combat tuberculosis with the most scientific weapons available, by providing the Russian people with the necessary medical literature and vaccines, are invited to forward their contributions to the Soviet Russia Medical Relief Committee, Room 506, 110 West 40th Street, New York City. I am, etc.,  
New York City.

J. MICHAEL,  
Secretary of the Committee.

### AN AFFIRMATION AGAINST WAR.

SIRS: Will you allow me through your columns to bring to the notice of your wide body of readers an interesting movement which has lately been set on foot in England. A number of well-known Englishmen and women have drawn up the following Affirmation Against War and are now offering it for general signature:

Believing that all war is wrong, and that the arming of the nations, whether by sea, land, or air, is treason to the spiritual unity and intelligence of mankind, I declare it to be my intention never to take part in war, offensive or defensive, international or civil, whether by bearing arms, making or handling munitions, voluntarily subscribing to war-loans, or using my labour for the purpose of setting others free for war-service.

Already a number of representative signatories have indicated their support—among the better known on this side of the water are Mr. Maurice Hewlett, Mr. George Lansbury, Mr. John William Graham, Mr. A. Fenner Brockway and Mr. W. J. Chamberlain—and it is proposed to call a conference at an early date with the object of linking up this movement with similar movements in other countries, thus forming an international union against war, pledged to work for complete disarmament in every country.

It has occurred to me that, like myself, others of your readers may be sufficiently interested in this new movement to wish to communicate with the secretary, Miss C. M. Brown, 23 Bride Lane, London, E. C. 4. I am, etc.,  
Chicago, Illinois.

J. K. MAURICE.

### WHAT IS THE MATTER WITH FARMING?

SIRS: I rather suspect that your reasoning that farming does not pay because land bears a monopoly-value and is too much mixed up with the real-estate business is not the final answer to your own question as to what is the matter with farming as an industry; nor do I think that the National City Bank is correct when it states that the governmental system of cost-accounting will always show that there is no profit in farming because land-values rise whenever crop-values do.

Land-values and cost-accounting systems do not affect the prices which farmers receive for their products. Under our present social and economic conditions, it is not possible to consider the profits in farming upon a basis of cost of production or upon the monopoly-value of land. It is possible for

a farmer to adopt the latest and most modern cost-accounting system. He may be a very good farmer—one who is producing intensively at minimum costs. He may include all his costs of labour, plowing, sowing, fertilizing, cultivating and harvesting. But the price at which he sells his product is all too frequently less than the sum of all these expenses, because market-price is something over which the farmer has no control. He may deduct from his expenses interest on the capital value of his land, and still the price at which he sells is frequently less than the actual production-costs. For all practical purposes the land may well have been community-property upon which no interest was charged.

A very practical illustration may be found in the present condition of the farmers who produced our great basic agricultural commodities, wheat, cotton and corn, last season. The market-price of any one of these commodities has never been high enough this season to pay the cost of production exclusive of any allowance for interest on land-value. No matter what value is placed upon the land itself it has no value as a capital investment. If farmers are buying real estate it is because they must become owners in order that they may take their chance at farming.

Land-values may increase when prices of farm-products are high, provided the prices show a substantial profit on the capital investment in the land. Land-values decrease materially during any protracted period of price-depression. Except in those sections of the Pacific Coast where the farmers are intelligently organized by commodities into co-operative marketing associations, farm-land is sold for what it will bring, not for what it is worth as an interest-bearing investment. Where the farmers are specifically organized into farm-marketing associations, land-values are largely predicated upon the interest-bearing value per acre. There are many cases of this class of valuation on the Pacific Coast.

You must go much farther in your inquiries. All present questions relating to farm-profits are seemingly predicated upon the theory that capital is a vested interest entitled to control of the distributing machinery, and that this machinery is something holy, a perfected structure, around which all the economics of food-production and distribution must revolve. This control permits of arbitrary price-fixing to both producer and consumer.

Under present conditions, the solution lies in control of the distributing machinery by the producers and the consumers. The farmer is interested in the farming industry as such. All the multiplicity of distributing agencies are under the control of profit-takers, and the farming industry must suffer, because profit-taking is premised upon buying as low as possible, and selling as high as possible. As long as the distributing agencies control prices of farm-products, any system predicated farmers' profits upon a cost-of-production basis is fallacious.

The farmers are already awakened to the possibility of controlling distribution to wholesale terminal points in the great consuming centres, and are organizing co-operative marketing-associations for this express purpose. The consumers can do the same thing—organize for retail distribution, meeting the farmers directly at the wholesale terminal points.

We may all live long enough to see this accomplished. I am, etc.,

J. F. LANGNER.

New York City.

#### AGRICULTURAL RECONSTRUCTION.

SIRS: If your correspondent, Mr. Burton Rascoe, is ingenuous and really desires to further agricultural reconstruction, I should like to suggest that he assist me to spread broadcast the following facts:

1. David Lubin tried earnestly for many years to get the truth about the necessity for co-operative rural credit before the American people and their Congress. He accurately predicted our present unfortunate situation if such rural credit was denied. When Mr. Lubin's repeated appeals could be shelved no longer, President Taft sent his American Commission, appointed through the governors of the States, to Europe to study the problem. In his letter accompanying the findings of this Commission addressed to the governors of the States Mr. Taft said:

A study of these reports and the recommendations of Ambassador Herrick which I am sending you, convinces me of the adaptability to American conditions of the co-operative credit-plan as set forth in the organization of the Raffaeisen banks in Germany. . . . We must establish a credit-system of, for and by the farmers, of the United States. It were better, otherwise, not to consider the matter at all. . . . Their establishment is generally a matter for State legislation and encouragement, their organization and management are wonderfully simple, and the experience of the European countries shows that their success is practically inevitable where the environment is congenial to their growth and where proper laws are passed for their conduct.

2. The American Bankers' Association immediately got busy (just as they are now getting busy in their attempts to destroy the industrial programme of North Dakota) and sent their own commission to Europe, in advance of Mr. Taft's, to head off the adoption of any scheme of co-operative rural credit. The bankers met Ambassador Herrick and Mr. Lubin in Paris in a conference which lasted nearly a whole week. Their discussions make mighty interesting reading just now. The bankers wanted "mortgage credit-banks" to be set up by bankers. Mr. Lubin strenuously opposed this demand and called attention to the fact that "the movement in the early 'eighties for mortgage-banks by bankers, led to disastrous results." He quoted from Mr. Edward F. Adams's "Sound Currency" that: "loans were largely speculative and methods deceptive and at times fraudulent." The bankers had depended on assistance from Ambassador Herrick, inasmuch as he had been president of the American Bankers' Association, also governor of Ohio, and was himself possessed of large banking-interests. "Governor Herrick," it is recorded, "listened attentively to both sides of the question. On being asked for his opinion, he said he preferred to defer it for his Report to the Administration, which he was about to draw up; nevertheless, he unhesitatingly expressed himself strongly in favour of the proposed investigation by the Select Committee in the European countries." Conservative bankers have been knocking Mr. Herrick ever since for not playing the game on that occasion! In spite of the great number of able, interested financiers who accompanied Mr. Taft's commission in order to hamstring it, only six of the sixty-one commissioners made a minority-report against the Raffaeisen system of rural credit. The grounds for their opposition are evident when their occupations, such as banker, cotton-manufacturer, lawyer-farmer, etc., are known. A great newspaper "drive" was promptly ordered by the bankers, assisted by Boards of Trade, *et hoc genus omne* and the report of Mr. Taft's commission was smothered and its effect killed. Yet Mr. Roger Babson says that we learned the art of propaganda from England during the war!

3. Among the first of the solid citizens typically representative of those who hastened to see that the farmers of North Dakota got kicked roundly in the slats, was our old friend ex-President William H. Taft. In fact, he administered a few good kicks himself. Yet, these fool farmers had only placed in active operation the principles so ably advocated by David Lubin up to the moment of his death and by the Select Committee appointed by that same ex-President William H. Taft. Mr. Taft and the other solid citizens were ably assisted in their destructive efforts by the Bankers' Association of North Dakota, as well as of the United States, and by numberless commercial I. W. W.s (i. e., Boards of Trade and Chambers of Commerce) and the commercial "Holy Rollers" (Rotarians), all of whom rendered noble service in the cause. Hence the recent bank-failures in North Dakota which are the result of the efforts to destroy the Bank of North Dakota, a bank owned by the people.

These, then, are my suggestions to Mr. Rascoe. The farmers' industrial programme which is dependent upon the Bank of North Dakota for funds, is now widely advertised and has received much commendation from some of the greatest of progressive thinkers in the country. It can not be secretly strangled as was the report of President Taft's commission. It is gaining ground and the propaganda of silence in relation to it, is now evident in the "kept press." But I think Mr. Burton Rascoe should pay a visit to North Dakota; he will find there that a certain amount of difference exists between the proletariat of Oklahoma as he has described it and that of North Dakota. But as a matter of fact, I have evidence that the farmers of Oklahoma are not as unintelligent as Mr. Rascoe represents them to be. They may perhaps be heard from later.

After spending nearly seven years in the environment of a great university, and after hearing the evidence of many men who are familiar with other universities in many widely separated States, I no longer wonder at a world-war, or at the world being "long" on religion and "short" on Christianity, or—at almost anything. The ways of our so-called leaders and teachers are like the ways of Providence—"past finding out." Mr. Rascoe will doubtless agree with me, that it is the great, the good, and the godly, that are literally raising hell in the world. I am, etc.,

JOEL HENRY GREENE.

P. S. Authority for the above quotations may be found in "Compilations on Agricultural Credit Banks," Government Printing Office, Washington, 1912, also "Majority Report," Sixty-third Senate, Doc. No. 261, Part I.

## BOOKS.

## THE OTHER-WORLDLY MR. WELLS.

MR. WELLS's "Outline of History"<sup>1</sup> is the most discussed book of the year; and naturally so, for the author has a large following among English-speaking peoples, especially in the United States, and anything which comes from the press under his prevailing name—whether romance or religion, current socialism or universal history—is greedily seized upon. Mr. Wells is the sort of writer Americans like. He is the romanticist turned journalist. He is serious—but not too serious. He is radical—but not dangerously radical. He is scientific—because he says he is. He is almost always interesting.

But there are other and even more substantial reasons for the vogue of Mr. Wells's latest literary venture. He has rushed in where few "historians" have dared to tread. He has caught a vision denied to most "specialists." He has grasped the unity and continuity of world history, the indivisible and unfolding human epic. Moreover, he has availed himself of scholarly researches in the newer sciences that are allied to history—geology, anthropology, social psychology, and comparative religion—and has sought to make of them an appropriate and strictly up-to-date stage-setting for his play, "Man in the Universe." Further, not content with sketching merely the conventional European background of our present civilization, he has reached out and told us something of the growth of culture among Aztecs and Peruvians, among Chinese and Japanese, among Hindus and Mongols; and finally, in harmony with a large and influential school of historians in the United States, he has endeavoured to approach history as a utilitarian, dwelling on such facts and events in the past as appear to augment our understanding of the present and to point our path to the future.

A goodly number of "professional historians" have had one or another of these general aims in mind, but the whole synthesis of Mr. Wells is novel and illuminating. It is his synthesis which particularly appeals to the lay reader. Besides, a synthesis of universal history by a brilliant English novelist exactly fits the temper and fancy of our generation. The great war and its aftermath have disillusioned us and raised in our minds anxious doubts and queries—has mankind always been so bad? is there any hope of salvation?—and it is Mr. Wells who comes forward at the psychological moment and obligingly gives us not only an interesting and novel synthesis of world history, but general answers to our questions and doubts. "Yes," he says, in substance, "man has always been bad; in fact, once upon a time, he was much worse than he is now. He is getting better (perhaps) and before long he is going to push down the clutch and go into high speed." Which assurance is heartily welcomed by everybody right now, and the popular Mr. Wells becomes even more popular.

The "Outline" is an imposing work in two stout volumes. Its narrative proceeds chronologically, growing more detailed in measure as it reaches the present time. Of the first volume, a third is devoted to creation and primitive man, a third to the ancient empires, Judaea, Greece, and India, and a

third to the rise and fall of the Roman Empire. Of the second volume, a scant third is consecrated to the Middle Ages in Europe and Asia, a more liberal third to modern history to 1815, and the largest third to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus the proverbial man-in-the-street now has at hand a whole story of mankind to date, and, lest he think it too little for the ten dollars and a half which the publishers charge him, Mr. Wells has kindly added (without extra charge) a kind of apocalypse, a peep into the future, a most reassuring epilogue of how man is destined "to live happily ever after."

Mr. Wells modestly disclaims being a "trained historian," and the reviewer has no mind to strip him of his modesty. The "Outline" is not "scientific" history. It is to history what literary criticism by Mr. Edison might be to literature or what a history of science by Mr. Chesterton might be to chemistry—bold, provocative, and interesting, but very lame. Mr. Wells, the romantic novelist, the serious moralist, and the philosopher of natural monism, has written a "history," which is peculiarly interesting as a whole but which is particularly weak in details. At least on topics in mediæval and modern history with which I am familiar as a student, it is replete with errors and misapprehensions, and every specialist with whom I have talked on the subject—geologist, anthropologist, sinologist, or historian of antiquity or of the United States—assures me that the only worth-while portions of the book are those dealing with fields other than his own.

A "scientific" glamour is cast about the work by the statement on the title-page that it was "written with the advice and editorial help of Mr. Ernest Barker, Sir H. H. Johnston, Sir E. Ray Lankester, and Professor Gilbert Murray." But the advice of these gentlemen seems to have been given *after*, rather than *before*, the preparation of the manuscript and to have been accepted only in the form of amusing chatter in footnotes. The chatter reminds one of a group of bright schoolboys tugging at the coat-tails of their inexperienced master, and tugging in vain. Sir E. Ray Lankester tugs rather gently on the subject of biology; Professor Gilbert Murray tugs mischievously about classical lore; and Mr. Ernest Barker tugs in a most determined fashion at some of Mr. Wells's idiosyncrasies in political science. Unique among the four "advisers" is Sir Harry Johnston who pushes rather than tugs, and Sir Harry is quite Wellsian himself: he knows a little about everything. In fact, it would be an interesting diversion to run through the two bulky volumes and make a list of the topics on which Sir Harry Johnston speaks *ex cathedra*. Such a catalogue would include primitive man, the ogre in folk-lore, the disappearance of elephants from Greece, the early Egyptians, the spelling of Sha'ul (for Saul) and of Shelomoh (for Solomon), the derivation of the word "Mogul," the wide adaptation of the words "Rome" and "Caesar," the explorations of the fifteenth century, the causes of the great war, American retention of the Philippines, and the Nubian wild ass.

It is possible that Sir E. Ray Lankester did assist Mr. Wells in selecting bibliography on biological evolution and primitive man, for on these subjects the author has mainly used reliable and up-to-date treatises. It is manifestly unfair, how-

<sup>1</sup> "The Outline of History." H. G. Wells. New York: The Macmillan Company.

ever, to hold Mr. Ernest Barker or Professor Gilbert Murray responsible for the bibliography of the strictly historical portions of the work. In these fields are unmistakable signs of the amateur and dilettante. Mr. Wells relies for general information largely on the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, on Helmholtz's old-fashioned general history, and on two elementary manuals by Americans—Messrs. Robinson and Breasted, and Messrs. Thatcher and Schewill. On primitive society he utilizes the fanciful and highly-coloured "Golden Bough" of Frazer; on Julius Cæsar his chief source is the imaginative Ferrero, and on the later Roman Empire his foil is Gibbon. From Motley's overdrawn "Rise of the Dutch Republic" he derives his knowledge of the sixteenth century, and from Carlyle's fuliginous pages he reconstructs the French Revolution. On Napoleon he cities Messrs. R. M. Johnston, J. Holland Rose, and Thomas Hardy's "Dynasts." Messrs. Dillon and Keynes are the twin keys which unlock to him the inner recesses of the recent peace conference.

The author's reliance on secondary works which are elementary, prejudiced, or antiquated, explains many of the mistakes and misconceptions with which his work abounds. Instead of popularizing the latest scholarly researches in history, Mr. Wells has assembled much out-of-date miscellany. He is among the historical stragglers, not in the vanguard. For example, he affirms not once but thrice (I, 560, 604, II, 58) that the Roman Empire fell in 476, although Professor James Harvey Robinson pointed out long ago how insignificant was the year 476 in the annals of the Empire. Again, Mr. Wells waves aside the whole early development of such an important institution as the papacy with the breezy assertion that "with the final fall of the Western Empire, [the pope] took over the ancient title of *pontifex maximus* which the emperors had held, and so became the supreme sacrificial priest of the Roman tradition." He dismisses the Roman Law in a footnote, and when he reaches the Middle Ages he passes over its revival altogether. His whole treatment of the Middle Ages, in fact, betrays crass ignorance and unmitigated bigotry. He makes the Crusades the central theme of mediæval history and grossly underestimates the intellectual revival in Europe between the twelfth and fifteenth centuries: he makes Roger Bacon a lone and persecuted scientist; he confuses and misunderstands realism and nominalism; he only alludes to the universities; he devotes barely seven lines to art; and of the guild-system—the industrial democracy of the Middle Age—he makes no mention whatsoever.

Moreover, he displays remarkable *naïveté* on the subject of racial peculiarities: according to him (and only to him) the Anglo-Saxons and Northmen regarded religious celibates "with the profoundest scepticism and suspicion," and "the English were naturally a non-sacerdotal people," while "the Irish found the priest congenial." "The English [whom Mr. Wells loves] are not a mentally docile race," but Mr. David Lloyd George [whom Mr. Wells presumably detests] has "Celtic traits." The Jews and other Semitic folk have always been "counting people." The idea of social distinctions has always been "more acceptable to the German mind than to the British or French." The French have had no "parliamentary" tradition. The "persecuting countries" have been "France and Spain

and Italy." On Ireland, Mr. Wells is at his worst. "Ireland had become," he says, in the nineteenth century, "a land of peasants, blankly ignorant and helplessly priest-riden," and the fault was not at all England's. Not one hint does Mr. Wells give of the real historical basis of the Irish question—English landlordism in Ireland. Rather, he maintains it "was the direct result of orthodox Catholic teaching; the priests were all-powerful with the people and they taught them nothing; not even washing or drainage; they forbade them to seek any Protestant learning, they allowed their agricultural science to sink to mere potato-growing, and they preyed upon their poverty." This diatribe is not from an Ulster Orangeman but from the enlightened Mr. Wells! It is not *naïveté* but patriotic bigotry. There is, moreover, absolutely nothing in his book about Irish developments since 1850 except the narrowly political.

In a manner that we supposed had gone out of fashion, even in evangelical textbooks, Mr. Wells talks about the "sale of indulgences, whereby the sufferings of the soul in purgatory could be commuted for a money-payment." With straight face he repeats twice the legend of Galileo muttering "it moves nevertheless." At Jean Jacques Rousseau he jokes and scoffs in the spirit of an Edmund Burke, despite Mr. Ernest Barker's most vehement tugging at his coat-tails. On the French Revolution he is preposterous. Carlyle is here his romantic and wild-eyed cicerone, with the astounding result that Mr. Wells devotes five pages to the spectacular march of the women to Versailles, twenty-seven lines to the great social and political reforms effected from 1789 to 1791 (and most of what he says in these lines is erroneous), ten lines to the reforms from 1791 to 1795, and four pages to the Reign of Terror—and a melodramatic Terror it is, all blood and gore and knitting-women and guillotines.

Every section of the "Outline" is characterized by gullibility. At first the reviewer was minded to except the portion dealing with primitive men, for Mr. Wells showed no little skill and critical acumen in separating fact from hypothesis when he dealt with the *Pithecanthropus erectus*, with the Neanderthalers, and with the Cro-Magnards and Grimaldi folk. These last two races, Mr. Wells contends, in harmony with the most reputable anthropologists, were the first "true men"; they lived some 25,000 years ago and had "a human fore-brain, a human hand, an intelligence very much like our own." Mr. Wells, however, is never content to let facts speak for themselves. He must interpret them to suit his own thesis. Nay more, if geologists will not supply him with facts, he must hypothecate them.

We find fossils in the Eocene, [he says] of monkeys and lemurs, but of one particular creature we have as yet not a single bone. It was half-ape, half-monkey; it clambered about the trees and ran, and probably [why the doubt?] ran well, on its hind legs on the ground. It was small-brained by our present standards, but it had clever hands with which it handled fruits and beat nuts upon the rocks and perhaps [!] caught up sticks and stones to smite its fellows. It was our ancestor [I, 57].

Having declared that there were no "true men" prior to the Cro-Magnards, some 25,000 years ago, Mr. Wells proceeds to write a long chapter "about the things that were going on inside these brains of which we have traced the growth and development through a period of 500,000 years from the

*Pithecanthropus* stage." The chapter is in our author's most romantic style. Some inspiration and a few rhetorical touches are gotten from Frazer's "Golden Bough" but much of it is evolved from the inner consciousness of the author of "The First Men in the Moon."

I have said that Mr. Wells interprets facts to suit his own thesis. But what is his thesis? I would have a less serious quarrel with his work if he had chosen a text and stuck to it throughout. As a matter of fact, he has two theses, and sometimes he serves the one and sometimes he serves the other. The result is perplexing, to put it mildly. One of his theses is to show us how bad we are, that "there is no health in us." Let Wells the pessimist speaks forth:

The early palæolithic strain is still strong in us [II. 375]. The fears and jealousies of the squatting-place and the cave still bear their dark blossoms in our lives [I. 472]. Make men and women only sufficiently jealous or fearful or drunken or angry, and the hot red eyes of the cavemen will glare out at us to-day. We have writing and teaching, science and power; we have tamed the beasts and schooled the lightning; but we are still only shambling towards the light. We have tamed and bred the beasts, but we have still to tame and breed ourselves [I. 377].

At the present time we have the most intense and absurd rivalry among the world Powers, "with half-educated or illiterate populations at home, with a mere handful of men, a few thousand at most, engaged in scientific research, with internal political systems in a state of tension or convulsive change, with a creaking economic system of the most provisional sort, and with religions far gone in decay," and superstitious allegiance to new tribal deities far advanced. Indeed, the twin notions of nationality and imperialism that have dominated Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, have been accepted "because people in general had neither the sweeping views that a scientific study of history can give, nor had they any longer the comprehensive charity of a world religion."

The other thesis of Mr. Wells is to reassure us and tell us how good we are and how progressive. Listen now to the optimist:

We have seen our kind rising out of the unconsciousness of animals to a continuing racial self-consciousness [I. 361]. Year by year, more and more rapidly, our common knowledge increases [I. 222]. For two hundred years there has been, mainly under the influence of the spirit of science and inquiry, a steady improvement in the methods of production of almost everything that humanity requires [II. 274].

This has "finally led the toboggan of human affairs into its present swift ice-run of progress," so that in a little more than a century "man made a stride in the material conditions of his life vaster than he had done during the whole long interval between the palæolithic stage and the age of cultivation, or between the days of Pepi in Egypt and those of George III." Out of the present time "there may emerge a moral and intellectual revival, a religious revival."

There will still be mountains and the sea, there will be jungles and great forests, cared for indeed and treasured and protected; the great plains will still spread before us and the wild winds blow. But men will not hate so much, fear so much, nor cheat so desperately—and they will keep their minds and bodies cleaner [II. 592]. The day may be close at hand [II. 594].

Side by side these contradictory theses appear. Frequently a sermon is preached on the one; frequently a moral is drawn from the other. It is akin to the method pursued by certain Christian

preachers—the interspersing of bright promises of a future life of blessedness with grave and melancholy reproaches for sin and hardness of heart. If all men are as wicked as the preacher says, how shall they be saved? Yet, "the day may be close at hand."

Moralizing is viewed by most scholars of the present day as incompatible with "scientific" history, and that St. Augustine and Orosius and Bossuet "moralized" has been urged as an objection against their historical-mindedness. But neither St. Augustine in his "City of God" nor Orosius in his "Seven Books of History against the Pagans" nor Bossuet in his "Discourse on Universal History" is more pointedly moral than Mr. Wells in his "Outline." Mr. Wells perpetually passes moral judgments on historical characters. He constantly interrupts his narrative to insert preachments and moral reflections.

When all is said and done, the chief trouble with the "Outline" is its enshrouding and engulfing spirit of "other-worldliness." Chronic moralizings are but one sign of this trouble. Throughout his entire book, Mr. Wells shows amazingly slight interest in actual social conditions, in economics, in the relation of politics to the life of the people, or in popular education; and anyone who expects from this former Fabian socialist an "economic interpretation" of history is doomed to disappointment. There is, as I have already indicated, no account whatsoever of the mediæval guilds, but Mr. Wells is equally silent regarding any modern movement for social and economic reform outside of Marxian socialism, which, in its doctrinaire form, is itself pretty "other-worldly." Mr. Wells's primary interests are in cosmology and philosophy. His enthusiasms are obviously in Genesis and Creation, in original sin and human depravity, in the moral lessons to be drawn from kings and chronicles, and, most markedly, in his visions of the life to come. The apocalyptic conclusion of his work has no direct relationship with what precedes it, but it glows with heightening fervour and mysticism up to the ultimate revelation: "Life, for ever dying to be born afresh, for ever young and eager, will presently stand upon this earth as upon a footstool, and stretch out its realm amidst the stars."

Napoleon Bonaparte was no saint, and prior to Mr. Wells he had been represented as rather human, even a little bit earthy. But Mr. Wells, in his own other-worldly scheme of things, is not content to treat Napoleon as a mere human being who did some things wisely and other things foolishly or maliciously; rather, he must incarnate the Devil, and for this unenviable purpose Napoleon can be made to serve, I suppose, as well as anyone.

In all history [proclaims Mr. Wells], there is no figure so completely antithetical to the figure of Jesus of Nazareth, whose pitiless and difficult doctrine of self-abandonment and self-forgetfulness we can neither disregard nor yet bring ourselves to obey. That summons to a new way of life haunts our world to-day, haunts wealth and comfort and every sort of success. It is a trouble to us all. Our uneasiness grows. Napoleon was free from it. The cultivation of the Napoleonic legend seems to offer a kind of refuge. From salvation [II. 376].

In the Wellsian demonology Napoleon is but the chief devil—a kind of *primus inter pares*. There are other devils, as there are saints. In fact, all important historical characters whom Mr. Wells discusses, are either good or bad; and when they are good, they are very, very good, but when they

are bad they are horrid. High among the good ones are Gautama Buddha, Asoka, Pericles, Jesus, Cicero, Constantine, Roger Bacon, Emperor Frederick II, Wycliffe, and Charles Darwin. Low among the bad ones are Alexander the Great, Cato, Julius Cæsar, Saint Paul, Charlemagne, Innocent III, Emperor Charles V, Rousseau, Napoleon, and William II.

Of religion Mr. Wells never ceases to talk—and to talk, as becomes him, with righteous theological furor. He does not like the "Old Man" religion of Neolithic men (whatever that was), but he admires the hypothetical "simplicity" and "directness" of Palæolithic religion. He praises the "intolerance of the Jewish mind" because it kept "its essential faith clear and clean," but he roundly condemns the Christian Church for insisting upon dogmas and he flays "mediæval intolerance." He likes Buddha and Christ as extravagantly as he detests Buddhism and Christianity, with this difference, that Buddhism did not become detestable until several centuries after Buddha, while Christianity, under the malign influence of Saint Paul and the Apostles, became immediately corrupt. He disapproves of Mohammed, though apparently he thinks that a bramble-bush can bear figs, for Mohammedanism he recommends as being kindly, generous, brotherly and chivalrous, and as having no doctrines or heresies! He denounces the Roman Church in the Middle Ages because it "had become a political body, using the faiths and needs of simple men to forward its schemes"; yet he assails Pope Innocent III because the Church did not play politics enough. He abuses Gibbon for abusing what he himself abuses.

Christianity [says Mr. Wells], has been denounced by modern writers as a 'slave religion.' It was. It took the slaves and the downtrodden, and it gave them hope and restored their self-respect, so that they stood up for righteousness like men and faced persecution and torment.

With his other accomplishments, Mr. Wells possesses the gift of prophecy. He is certain that Christianity and Islam and Buddhism will pass away; they are too "specialized." In their place will come his own religion, which is religion "pure and undefiled—the eightfold Way, the Kingdom of Heaven, brotherhood, creative service, and self-forgetfulness." Education must be "essentially religious," and the best kind of religious education has been that of the Jesuits. The reviewer is looking forward with interest to the day when the Jesuits shall teach children the simple creed of the "pure and undefiled" religion—there is no God but God, and H. G. Wells is his prophet.

In fairness to Mr. Wells, it must be said that he is not so serious as this all the time. Frequently he smiles and once in a while he laughs outright. And there are occasional flashes of wit and insight. The treatment of the Age of Pericles is noteworthy, and the characterizations of Cato and Constantine are refreshing. The survey of Roman history is excellent in form and more than half correct in content. The antagonism in early modern times between monarchy and private ownership and the rise of middle-class government in the Netherlands and in England are indicated clearly and cogently. The new "religious" character of modern nationalism is suggestively developed, together with its relations to economic imperialism and to popular misconceptions of "Darwinism." There is a neat summary of the Industrial Revolution and of the me-

chanical inventions that attended it. And it is diverting to behold Mr. Wells plucking halos from the venerated heads of Bismarck, Cavour, and Gladstone.

Despite hundreds of faults, the "Outline of History" is truly important, because its general synthetic aim is excellent, because it is timely, and because its author has a voice that "carries." Mr. Wells is preparing the way for scholars and making the world safe for historians. Henceforth professors will not fear to walk where Mr. Wells has leaped, and eventually one of them or a group of them will produce a history of man in the universe that will be as sound and reliable as the "Outline" before us is inaccurate and impressionistic. When that time comes, Mr. Wells will be read, not for information concerning facts as they actually were, but for information concerning what an English novelist early in the twentieth century imagined were facts. Just as Gibbon's "Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire" is read nowadays, if it is read at all, primarily to satisfy the inquiring mind about the philosophy and prejudices of the eighteenth century, so a hundred years from now some curious person may idly turn these pages of Mr. Wells in a search for the foibles and half-knowledge of our time.

CARLTON J. H. HAYES.

#### SCATTERED GLEAMS.

IN the dreary, deadly year of 1918, when everything in London and the world at large seemed to be at a standstill, there appeared a slender volume entitled "Finding," which contained a few stray, scattered gleams of true poetic impulse. The author of that book, a young lady named Helen Dircks, has now produced another collection entitled "Passenger"; an equally slender volume, equally liable with its predecessor to be dismissed by super-trained critics as a phenomenon of no importance. I am not yet aware than anything human can be of no importance to the critic; and the most outwardly "unimportant" volume may contain as much, if not more, matter for reflection to him as the most world-resounding "masterpiece."

This work is, above all, feminine. Miss Dircks writes about what engages her sympathies—and her sympathies are as immediate and direct as the range of her imaginative understanding is limited. This is most assuredly a specifically feminine trait. To say so much is not in any sense to imply that the feminine nature is inferior to the masculine. On the contrary, it is quite impossible to conceive of a masculine poet who is without certain elements in his nature which act in a similar way, and which immediately engage his sympathies in some aspects of the world which he sees about him. The difference between the feminine and the masculine nature in poets is rather that the male, confronted with the necessity of portraying or presenting what he has felt, refers his imagination to the scrutiny of some general reader, fixed already in his mind; the woman, on the other hand, in so far as she is purely a woman, refers every conception she has formed of the world inevitably back to herself. Miss Dircks, in the book that lies before me, as in her former volume, is purely a woman, writing as a woman. The beauty she achieves is entirely unpremeditated. The badness is equally unpremeditated. Both are absolutely her own.

Whether in her sonnets or in her *vers libres*, the note is never forced to harmonize with any prevailing fashion:

You are a vendor  
Of a curious merchandise—  
The careless touch,  
The quick caress,

<sup>1</sup> "Passenger." Helen Dircks. New York: George H. Doran Co.

The fleeting glance;  
And yet I come so willingly to buy,  
And pay  
With the gold-dust of my heart  
And heavy lead of precious thoughts.

Since we are so much you and I, and we  
Have all the world to be our retinue,  
I would be scrupulous and yet be new  
To this so strange perfection, childishly;  
Oh, I would have you understand this me  
So that each word I speak you find in you  
Its chime for chime, and everything I do  
A shadow of your knowing shadow be.

These brief examples are worth reams of detailed argument about how one ought to write. In them, the subject and the way in which it is treated are entirely one. It is from this standpoint that we are permitted to judge of the advance of their author, or of the greatest poet dealing with far higher themes. No other standpoint is critically permissible.

Miss Dircks may be the tiniest-voiced of England's singers, but she is a poet.

JOHN GOULD FLETCHER.

### THE RISE AND FALL OF CHARTISM.

THE late Mr. Julius West's "History of the Chartist Movement" is a fresh documentation of an interesting period of industrial maladjustment, based upon 180 volumes, mainly of press cuttings, compiled by the "radical tailor of Charing Cross." These volumes remained almost inaccessible in the British Museum library for forty-seven years without being catalogued, and if in the joy of his find Mr. West has allowed his facts to clutter the middle of the road and block the march of his story, what the book loses in literary merit it gains in precision of detail. For us in the United States, the history of Chartism has a peculiar significance. Americans have been more or less faithful followers of the Six Points, as it were, from the time the Constitution was established to the period when the pursuit of the initiative, the referendum, and the recall became a popular pastime; for the theory of Chartism is that free legislation—and plenty of it—is the basis of all industrial and social improvement, and the classic example of the failure of Chartism is not in England, the country that rejected it, but in the United States, the country that boasted its triumphs.

Chartism may be defined as an attempt to control a disorderly industrial society by means of a political mechanism—which, on the whole, is much like trying to run an automobile by strapping it in a leather harness, putting blinkers over the headlights, and throwing the reins into the hands of a coachman. The institutions that have been produced for the control of political society, with its courts and legislatures and armies and bureaucracies and ballot-boxes, have but little competence, as a lawyer would say, to guide the powerful congeries of associations and corporations that perform most of the work of the world to-day; and it was the failure of the Chartists to recognize this fact that led the working-class movement down the blind alley whose butt-end is Whitehall and Washington.

The ailment that caused the workers to turn to Chartism for relief was real enough, in all conscience: but the remedy that Lovett and O'Connor offered had no virtues except the promises that were written, so to say, on the wrapper. It was not so much power to improve their conditions that the working-class needed, as a knowledge of the forces that had made those conditions possible. Had they perceived that the misery of the urban worker in England was largely due to the enclosures of land which had been going on since the Renaissance, with the delivery of a depauperate agricultural proletariat into the new industrial villages and cities, the working-class reformers might have attacked the roots of the disease instead of merely poulticing the symptoms. People once used laudanum for a tooth-

ache, however, in lieu of treating the condition by the rigorous methods of a dental surgery whose technique had still to be developed; and the movements of which Chartism is an example may be described as the laudanum of the body politic. One wonders whether the search for scientific knowledge might not have proceeded a little more rapidly had political anodynes not been so generously plentiful.

LEWIS MUMFORD.

### SHORTER NOTICES.

It is hard to see why an entire volume in the "Library of Music and Musicians," edited by the indefatigable Dr. A. Eaglefield Hull, should be devoted to Josef Holbrooke.<sup>1</sup> Mr. Holbrooke is a man of such overflowing energy and of such unbounded confidence in the importance of his own work that he has made his name familiar even to those who do not know his music; but while the tone adopted by his biographer is one of uncritical hero-worship, and we are assured that Sir Edward Elgar, Mr. Granville Bantock, and Mr. Josef Holbrooke are the greatest living British composers, the music examples of Mr. Holbrooke's work which are here printed reveal rather an over-facile, commonplace, and unindividual style. The book contains chapters on Mr. Holbrooke's life and on his compositions in various departments, and a complete list of his works.

D. G. M.

THERE is practically no limit to the kinds of books which might be written about New York, and Mr. Shackleton's "The Book of New York,"<sup>2</sup> although it lays titular claim to the definite article, is scarcely qualified to enjoy a monopoly. The seeker after a glorified guide-book, wherein contemporary description rubs elbows with shreds of history and patches of reminiscence, will find his needs acceptably filled in this volume, which covers the field somewhat unsystematically, but in a chatty, readable manner. The author has not separated the historical background from the contemporary scene, and thus imparts the illusion of an actual ramble. After several chapters of general treatment, he discusses successive neighbourhoods—such as Gramercy Park, Chelsea, Murray Hill, Greenwich Village. The atmosphere and the significance of these regions and their relation to the great city in which they are immersed, call for an imaginative pen, and Mr. Shackleton has, for the most part, commanded it.

L. B.

### A REVIEWER'S NOTE-BOOK.

I NOTICE that in the list of books which he particularly wants for the library of the new Department of American Literature and Civilization at the Sorbonne, Professor Cestre has included Mr. E. S. Nadal's "A Virginian Village and Other Papers." It is an excellent choice, as anything of Mr. Nadal's would be—if there were only more of Mr. Nadal's to choose from! Twenty-five or thirty years ago, he published two or three little books of essays, one of which I remember picking up, attracted by its savoury title. It was called "Notes of a Professional Exile" and was issued in the thumb-nail series of The Century Company; and it was made up of sketches of the life of a German watering-place, Zwiebak by name and presumably Homburg in fact. There are books, as there are places and persons, that leave behind them in the memory a fragrance after one has forgotten their features; one loses the image and one keeps the sense of them. So it is with this little work. The Oxford Dictionary describes charm as a "literary critics' word" for an "indefinable power of delighting." Shall we say that Mr. Nadal possesses this? Yes, and a virile charm also, as I have just discovered in re-reading "A Virginian Village."

BUT who is Mr. Nadal? It would perhaps be impertinent to ask if, in the "Autobiographical Notes" with which he has prefaced the book, he had not good-humouredly quoted this couplet of H. C. Bunner's—

Tell us, tell us, tell us, pray,  
Who is Nadal anyway?

<sup>1</sup> "Josef Holbrooke and His Work." George Lowe. New York: E. P. Dutton & Company.

<sup>2</sup> "The Book of New York." Robert Shackleton. Philadelphia: The Penn Publishing Co.

and proceeded to answer the question himself. Shall I say that he was born in Virginia in 1843 and spent his childhood, as a Methodist minister's son, wandering all over the South and the Middle West, settling for a year or two in Baltimore, in Washington, and finally in Brooklyn, that his father knew Lincoln and was sufficiently unlike the Methodist minister of popular tradition to have been a most lively and stimulating professor of literature and to have passed, in England once, a cordial evening with Dante Gabriel Rossetti? For eight or nine years, during the period 1870-1884, Mr. Nadal was a secretary of legation in London, under Motley and Lowell, and this experience is the theme of some of his most entertaining reminiscences. Since 1884, he tells us, he has been a writer and journalist in New York, chiefly occupied "with saddle and harness horses." Those are perhaps the main external facts that emerge from his notes, but one feels that Mr. Nadal's occupations have taken a quite secondary place in his life. In his youth, he says, he followed in succession several vocations to make a living, but his "one real employment was to sit on fences and look at natural scenery." This pursuit, he adds, "I daresay has some advantages. I should not expect a young fellow so employed to do me in a horse dicker, or to tell me any lies of any kind. But it is not favourable to that energy and spirit of enterprise which should characterize a young man." Have we anything to regret in this? A good half of the appeal of Mr. Nadal's personality lies in his utter unconsciousness of the hectic *Zeitgeist* of his age: his tone is that of a cheerful, hardy, friendly, adventurous and sensitive Epicurean. If one has anything to regret it is that he has not written a dozen other books: but in this country and in his generation it was only those that eschewed the fence, I suppose, who succeeded in expressing even a tenth of their latent powers.

WHAT immediately strikes one in Mr. Nadal's writing is that his senses are awake: he tastes, he smells, he hears. No doubt some of the colour and animation of the old American scene which he describes in these essays belongs to the subject. It remains to be explained why, when and how the veils of dullness, deadness and uniformity that so many observers nowadays find in the life of our great hinterland first settled over it. The Civil War accounts for the state of the South, but how about the Middle West? There is no more of the "Main Street" atmosphere in Mr. Nadal's Indiana than there is in his Virginia and Kentucky: he quite honestly and realistically conveys the impression that roses, guitars, poetry, love, and freedom of mind and speech were as characteristic of this old West as hog and hominy. He even finds it possible to say that there was a "joyful energy" in its Presbyterianism, and he speaks of John Hay as typical of the prairie boys who studied under his father at the Indiana college: "How keen he was, not only for fame and external success, but to make the most of himself in every way, in culture, in manners and accomplishments." It was there, that colour, that animation, that natural gaiety, that intensity; it has had too many other veracious chroniclers for one to doubt it; the isolation of those regions had not yet begun to tell upon their life and transform their innocence into complacency. But Virginia and Kentucky for Mr. Nadal are as vivid as ever; and he is able to tell us that the remote little village where he was born and to which he had travelled back is still beautiful in its profound bloom of summer. There he found for us the odorous verandahs and the smell of boxwood and the hardy currants and sunflowers, and the rose trees and the Southern nights. But let us have one of Mr. Nadal's own impressions:

It is the hum of that sleeping projectile, the bumble-bee, which is the voice of these rose trees—a much lustier creature than the Northern one, twice the size perhaps, with a much broader expanse of cloth of gold upon his back, and conducting himself with a swagger and a saturnine dignity like a bull's; formidable and with a look of momentum about him; scarcely conscious of that reserved armory of offence you are careful not to awaken, and yet expecting like em-

perors and other dangerous things to be got out of the way of, he hangs amid the sun-laden atmosphere of his fragrant den near the thorn, the canker-worm, and the blossom. The village is full of these rose trees. At night especially the air is very strong with the smell of them. The spreading branches of the oaks and evergreens keep to earth the fragrance of the gardens, which amid summer sights and odours seem to await the moonrise.

"I HAVE written a good deal about scenery since," says Mr. Nadal, reflecting on the days when his favourite seat was the top rail of a stake-and-ridered fence, "and have been told that I have rather a pretty gift for that kind of writing." He is more interesting there, to my mind, than in his recollections of Lowell and Motley and Matthew Arnold, or his characterizations of Washington and Lincoln. He has a little essay on "Texan Scenery" that is more alive, you would say, than the landscape itself. To get him at his best, however, you must have a horse in the scene. Horses, to Mr. Nadal, are what ships are to Melville or Conrad, an element, a universe; and there are moments when, in his enthusiasm, he seems to view the *genus homo* through equine eyes: "I think you will observe [for example] that a woman, when running for a street-car, usually paces, although this is probably due to a sense that it is the more feminine and modest method of progression." But hear this, if you wish to know the aesthetic sensations an animal can produce in a properly attuned spirit—the subject is a roan gelding which Mr. Nadal discovered near Lexington:

His beauty appeared particularly in the shape of the rump and in the carriage of the tail. There was an exquisite trick in the conformation of the quarters. . . . The tail was the other chief beauty. There was an airy grace in the carriage of it which reminded you of the fortunate work of some architect of genius.

Or this (of a little bay horse so well educated that "he would come upstairs and look out of the window"):

In the trot his feet strike the ground in perfect time and with steps like clockwork; his movement is like the throbbing of a rich and strong heart; as you rise and fall it warms the blood with a delightful glow. You really share his youth and life. There is, indeed, when you are mounted upon a horse that has vitality and heat enough for himself and you too, a kind of transfusion of blood—a truth which has perhaps afforded the basis for the beautiful idea of the centaur. Then turn to the following passage, and you will see that, if the presence of the right horse can make a poet of Mr. Nadal, it can turn him into a painter too. He is speaking of a black mare which he saw at an agricultural fair on the shore of Lake Ontario:

It was about four o'clock, and the sun was shining. I was looking over the track, and toward the water, which was blue, but not with the bold, salt blue of the ocean. In the place of this, the lake had a colour the like of which I might have expected to see on a vase or jar, but not on water. . . . A big schooner was moving upon the water, the sun glistening upon the bellying sails, as if upon cumulus cloud, the swelling canvas, of a fairy grace and lightness, flung to the midsummer zephyrs—the whole white mass of piled-up sail sliding along this plain of white china. The black mare was moving between me and this scene. But better still I saw her the next morning, when the lake was flashing under the sun and had the freshness and freedom of that part of the day. She was descending a slight declivity—the tan-bark rings of indoor horse-shows have no declivities—with an abundant and steady force and that ease which is the condition of all beauty in action.

What, in its way, could be better than that? But perhaps the most agreeable and the most surprising thing about Mr. Nadal is that, at the age of seventy-eight, he appears to like human beings, without regard to race, colour, or previous condition of servitude, quite as much as he likes horses.

THE Reviewer recommends the following recent books to the notice of readers of the *Freeman*:

"Punch: the Immortal Liar," by Conrad Aiken. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

"John Dryden," by Mark Van Doren. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co.

"French Civilization," by Albert Léon Guérard. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company.

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... 'Numb from the neck up,' the editor of the *Freeman* would probably pronounce me if he knew how little I appreciate his paper. From his point of view my lack of appreciation of the *Freeman's* profundities would be due to my stupidity and to my neglected education. Well, maybe it is. But certainly I shall not subscribe to the *Freeman* in order to be perpetually reminded of that melancholy fact. The *Freeman* fails to enlighten me, though I freely admit it is provocative of thought. But so is a Sam Lloyd puzzle."

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... The *Miscellany* column of the *Freeman*—although the present writer has attempted to persuade the editors (and in vain) to insert therein some of his work—is one of the most delightful in the magazine. The light, pliant, essay-sketch is shown here in some of its best manifestations."

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